HOCKEY!

The Story of the World's Fastest Sport

Richard Beddoes, Stan Fischler, and Ira Gitler

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NEW EXPANDED EDITION

by Richard Beddoes
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Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.
NEW YORK
Collier Macmillan Publishers
LONDON

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Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.
866 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022
Collier-Macmillan Canada Ltd.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 72-176062

Third Edition 1973

Second Printing 1974

Printed in the United States of America

PART ONE

The Old Six

Boston Bruins

BOSTON HOCKEY for 30 seasons, from 1924 to 1953 inclusive, was the cunning concoction of Arthur Howey Ross, the stubborn bear of the Bruins who managed their early conquests of the Stanley Cup, in 1928–29, 1938–39 and 1940–41.

Ross died in 1964, the victim of crippling arthritis and blurred eyesight and the remorseless rigors of 78. He groped through the last years, puzzled and fretful, and this made it too easy to forget what he had been.

What Ross had been was a persistent and inventive mind, an abrasive personality to match Tommy Gorman and Conn Smythe and Jack Adams in skirmishes that began when the Bruins played their first game on December 1, 1924. Before that, as an aggressive defenseman, he had been a shrewd, agile rebel.

His searching genius as a manager produced the puck and nets used almost universally in hockey today. Prior to his design, the nets were a primitive twine, so tight that pucks often bounced off the rear of the net and back into play. He sponsored a bulky, pliable mesh which made practically certain that any puck shot in, stayed in. He advocated, and had approved, a puck with a bevelled edge. He developed the first fiber guard on the back of skate boots to protect the vulnerable Achilles tendon.

Ross also was the first operator to pull his goalkeeper in a Stanley Cup playoff. The tactic, considered amazing at the time, did not work when Ross attempted it on March 26, 1931. He lifted goalie Cecil (Tiny) Thompson for a sixth attacker in the last minute, but

Montreal's Canadiens preserved their 1–0 lead. Canadiens won the series three games to two, and subsequently beat Chicago by the same margin for the Stanley Cup.

Ross developed a respect for money when he was a rookie bank clerk from the Ontario whistle stop of Naughton. Cobalt, he always contended, made him the highest paid player in hockey history—$1,000 for two games against despised rivals from the enemy mining town of Haileybury.

He was a hardy philosopher even then, 60 years ago, who believed in winning if he had to gouge eyeballs to do it. He did it to Haileybury in a rowdy doubleheader, to the unspeakable delight of Cobalt supporters.

"Jubilant fans pressed the thousand bucks on me," he recalled, years later, when he was inducted into the Hall of Fame. "They also gave me a sack of silver nuggets which had, by God, a good, game quality."

Money was the root of what owners considered Ross's rebellious evil in the early months of World War I when he was "barred for life" by the slightly comic National Hockey Association.

The league included Ottawa Senators, Montreal Canadiens, Quebec Bulldogs, Torontos, Toronto Shamrocks and Montreal Wanderers, who controlled Ross's playing rights. He quarreled with Samuel Lichtenhein, the monumental tightwad who owned the team and wanted to restrict salaries to $600 a man for a 20-game season.

Ross, taking no particular trouble to mask his moves, began signing players for higher guarantees if they would help him form a new league.

Lichtenhein blocked the revolt by directing T. Emmett Quinn, the obedient NHA president, to convene an urgent association meeting. "Ross is trying to undermine us," Lichtenhein insisted. "The bastard has got to go."

Elmer Ferguson, a venerable hockey historian still writing sports for the *Montreal Star*, was the unpaid secretary of the tribunal. "There were only two teams represented," Ferguson remembers. "Canadiens and Wanderers. President Quinn had the proxies for the other teams, and when he said 'aye' to Lichtenhein's motion to banish Ross, Art was gone. Then we all went for a drink."

The ban stuck for exactly three weeks, from November 28, 1914 to December 18, when Ross was signed by the Ottawa Senators. His expulsion was ignored, even by Lichtenhein, and he helped Ottawa

win the league championship. The team won by dismissing the Wanderers in a home-and-home totals-goals series, winning the first 4–0 and holding on to lose the second 1–0.

"Wanderers were pretty sure they could overcome the four-goal deficit in the second game," Elmer Ferguson recalls. "But they reckoned without the canny Ross. He devised a new form of defense for the second game, which saw Ottawa line up with four men out in front of the goalkeeper. Wanderers could only pierce such a defense for one goal."

Thus, the genesis of the defensive gesture called kitty-bar-the-door.

Ross played until 1918 when he was 32, turned to refereeing, then scented fresh money in the satchel of Charles Francis Adams of Boston. Adams was a chore boy in a grocery store in Newport, Vermont, who grew up to own a chain of groceterias; part of the bread, reported to be $15,000, purchased a National Hockey League franchise for Boston.

The Bruins won six games out of 30 in their first season, represented by an inferior crew that finished last. The best players were Jimmy Herberts and Carson Cooper, two outstanding amateurs from Ontario.

Two years later, when Frank and Lester Patrick peddled their depressed Western Canada League, Adams obtained the players who anchored Boston's first Stanley Cup team. He got a bargain fit for a grocery clerk, as it were: Duke Keats, Perc Galbraith, Harry Oliver, Harry Meeking, and the inimitable Eddie Shore—all for $50,000.

Adams was noted for many things, not including reckless spending, but he appreciated courage as that abused word fits hockey. One night Shore, the baleful defenseman, received brutal attention from the Big Three-S Line of the Montreal Maroons.

The three—Nels Stewart, Babe Siebert and Hooley Smith—had a collective butcher's touch. They broke his nose, slashed his face, detached him from his teeth. Shore defiantly kept playing, scarcely able to see out of one black eye. Afterward, in the Boston dressing room, he was greeted by Adams. "Here," Adams said, thrusting a $500-check at his bruised warrior. "Use this as a poultice for your face."

Ross and Adams made perfunctory gestures to Boston patriots by signing George Owen, an all-around Harvard athlete, to play defense. But Owen was gone by the spring of 1929 when the Bruins

won their first Stanley Cup. Shore was the combative cog of that team, as he would continue to be until Boston won a second Cup 10 years later.

Cecil (Tiny) Thompson had arrived to play goal by 1929, a position he handled with such vigilance that he would win the Vezina Trophy four times in the decade before he was replaced by Frank Brimsek of Eveleth, Minnesota.

The defensive flamboyance of Shore and Thompson was complemented by the Dynamite Trio, the first of two distinctive attacking units formed by Ross. The second, in the late thirties, was the Kraut Line of Milt Schmidt, Woody Dumart and Bob Bauer.

The Dynamiters had Ralph (Cooney) Weiland at center between Norman (Dutch) Gainor on left wing and Aubrey (Dit) Clapper on the right. Weiland, 64, coached Boston's last Cup conquest, in 1940–41, and has presided over Harvard's hockey team since 1951.

Clapper, rangy and amiable, had a steady genius that lasted from 1927 to 1947, a record for nonstop playing in the NHL until 1965. Since then Red Kelly and Allan Stanley and Bill Gadsby have survived 20 years of big league play. Clapper's permanence in a demanding game was the one feat admired by Gordon Howe of Detroit four years ago. "There's one thing I want to do," said Howe, who has done it all. "That's last 20 years, like Clapper."

Now Howe is beginning his twenty-fourth season and the end of his playing span is still off there, beyond the hockey horizon. "No telling how long Howe will last," Clapper says, squinting against the smoke of his cigarette in his plumbing shop in Peterborough, Ontario. "Gordie's so strong, he could last 25 years—or more."

Dutch Gainor, the third Dynamiter, died several years ago in a mental institution at Oliver, Alberta, victim of a boozy, capricious youth. He is regarded as the first to deceive opposing players with a quick double shift—faking one way, faking the other, then veering in the first direction after giving the opponent tangled feet.

The Bruins won their first Cup with dominating ease, winners of five consecutive games against Canadiens and Rangers. Weiland, a slick, black-haired sophomore, scored both goals as Thompson twice shut out Canadiens 1–0. They finished first five times in the American Division in the nine seasons between 1929–30 and 1937–38; they were first three more times immediately after the divisions amalgamated in 1938–39. The four years between 1937 and 1941 produced two Stanley Cups and the palmiest era in Bruins' history.

They set the longest undefeated record in the NHL: 15 wins and 8 ties between December 22, 1940, and February 25, 1941.

The playoffs of 1939, won by the Bruins in series against the Rangers and Leafs, belonged to Mel (Sudden-Death) Hill. "Who's Hill?" fans were demanding as they contemplated the Boston demolition crew of Brimsek, Shore, the Krauts, Clapper, Flash Hollett and the gifted Bill Cowley. The answer was that Hill was a chunky 175-pound athlete from Glenboro, Manitoba, who specialized, for a brief 12 days, in beating the Rangers in overtime.

Boston won the best-of-seven semifinal four games to three; Hill secured three of the wins with overtime goals. Boston won the first three games, Rangers won the next three and, after the regulation 60 minutes of the seventh, they were tied 1–1. Hill untied it with a goal after 48 minutes of overtime. Coach Lester Patrick of the losing Rangers had reason to be rueful. "I turned Hill down because he was too small . . . I didn't think he could stand the strain of a full season and the tough playoffs." Hill didn't provide any heroics in the Cup final against Toronto, but none was needed. The Bruins dismissed the Leafs in five games.

The Krauts dominated Boston's last Cup triumph in 1941. They twice got behind Toronto before winning a seven-game semifinal which went the limit, then whipped Detroit four in a row for the major prize. Milt Schmidt, in his last season before leading Bauer and Dumart in three years of war, scored three goals and assisted on four others in a personal rampage against Detroit.

In the 28 seasons since then the Bruins qualified a scant four times for the Cup final. Each time—in 1945–46, 1952–53, 1956–57 and 1957–58—they were beaten by the Canadiens. In each series the intensely competitive Schmidt was a worn link with the Bruins' bearish past; finished as a Stanley Cup player after 1953, he was installed as coach before the 1956–57 final. Among the latter-day Bruin stars were Fern Flaman, Bronco Horvath, Vic Stasiuk and Johnny Bucyk.

In more recent Cup appearances, the Bruins caught the overpowering Canadiens in the middle of the five consecutive championships. The first game of the 1957 series was typical: Canadiens won 5–1, Rocket Richard providing the margin with one of his churlishly inspired four-goal performances.

"It was," Boston goalie Don Simmons admitted, "humiliating."

Simmons used a word that fit the Bruins between 1959–60 and

1966–67, eight deplorable seasons when they finished fifth twice and sixth six times. There has always been some wolf in Boston hockey, but in those years the wolves were coyotes scavenging near the cellar.

In 1967–68, rebuilt around the precocious Bobby Orr, they came in third in the East Division of the expanded NHL. They were knocked out of the playoffs in four successive games, by the Canadiens.

In 1969, in the most exciting playoff in a decade, the Canadiens beat the Bruins in six tense games in the Eastern final.

"Always," muttered manager Milt Schmidt, "it's the Canadiens."

But Boston's boisterous partisans fervently believe that their bashing Bruins are heirs apparent to the Montreal mantle. Their vigorous renaissance coincided with the expansion of the NHL from six teams to 12.

The records indicate how the Bruins have been inflated in a time of flattening out everywhere else, except in Montreal. In 1968–69 Boston smashed many records and still finished behind Montreal in the East, three points out of first place.

They scored 303 goals, 39 more than the old mark established in one season by Chicago; Phil Esposito, a tall, mischievous center, obtained 126 points, 29 more than anyone accumulated before; they were the most penalized team in hockey history, 1,297 minutes compared to the 1,121 in penance served by Detroit Red Wings in 1964–65.

The collective sin of the Bruins was saluted by a derisive banner hung in the grimy Boston Garden, "PLAY DIRTY AND WIN!"

They weren't all roughhouse, as Dink Carroll commented in the *Montreal Gazette*: "The 1969 Bruins set many scoring records, paced by the Esposito–Ken Hodge–Ron Murphy line. But their firepower isn't all concentrated in one line. Two other trios—Fred Stanfield–John Bucyk–John McKenzie and Turk Sanderson–Ed Westfall–Glen Sather—can also put the puck in the net.

"The Bruins were better defensively, if only because Gerry Cheevers is much sharper in the nets. There is also Ted Green, along with Bobby Orr, Dallas Smith and Don Awrey, on a solid defense."

Besides expansion, one other circumstance altered the Boston case. They were the beneficiaries of a one-sided swap in the summer of 1967—Esposito, Hodge and Stanfield received in a trade with Chicago for defenseman Gilles Marotte, center Pit Martin and Jack

Norris, a minor-league goalkeeper. With a friend like Milt Schmidt found in Chicago manager Thomas Ivan, he can put up with a lot of enemies.

Harry Sinden, an intense 37-year-old coach who never played a game in the NHL, was given control of the club in 1966–67 after guiding a Boston affiliate, Oklahoma City Blazers, to the championship of the Central Pro League. He has a taste for turbulence.

The Bruins slathered Toronto Maple Leafs four consecutive times in the 1969 semifinals, twice by monstrous margins. They won the first two games at home, 10–0 and 7–0. Esposito tied a Stanley Cup record with six points, four goals and two assists, in the first rout.

The Boston future was at least as optimistic as Montreal's. Each team protected only 14 players and two goaltenders in the 1969 draft, under a complicated draft system, but several Bruins were exempt from the draft.

Orr, for example, had completed three years in the NHL, but was exempt because he was still eligible for junior hockey the previous winter; officially he was designated as "a first-year pro."

Five other Boston prospects—Rick Smith, Tom Webster, Steve Atkinson, Jim Harrison and Garnet Bailey—were also exempt as first-year professionals. Glen Sather was the only regular lost in the draft, gone to Pittsburgh Penguins.

The Bruins seemingly replaced the Montreal Canadiens as hockey's contemporary dynasty in May 1970 when they captured the Stanley Cup. To accomplish the feat Boston first eliminated New York in six games. Then the Black Hawks and Blues went down in four straight games each.

The general who directed the Bruins to the 1970 championship was Sinden, who disgusted with the frugal financial policies of the front office—he was being paid only $18,000 a season—suddenly accepted a $40,000 a year managerial job with Stirling-Homex, one of the largest manufacturers of prefabricated homes on the continent.

Sinden was replaced by Tom Johnson, the Bruins' assistant general manager, who had no experience as a coach either in the NHL or amateur hockey. The Bruins finished first in the East Division under Johnson as Esposito set new records with 76 goals and 152 points, and Orr broke all existing scoring marks for defensemen with 37 goals and 102 assists for 139 points. (The 102 assists surpassed all forwards as well.) Ken Hodge set a point record for right wings with 105 and Johnny Bucyk one for left wings with 116.

Each had over 60 assists which were also record breakers. The Bruins passed their old 303 goal high by 96. Twenty-five were short-handed, another record. About the only thing they didn't break was their penalty minute mark. (The Vancouver Canucks raised [or lowered] this standard to 1,371, which stood until the 1972–73 Philadelphia Flyers came along.)

Many people questioned the validity of the incredible scoring statistics and attributed them to the inflationary effect of expansion, but there was no doubt of Boston's potency. That is, until their old nemesis, the Montreal Canadiens, turned them into paper champs in the spring of 1971.

When the Bruins finished first again in 1971–72 and went on to win the Cup for the second time in three years, dynasty talk was revived. Then the old guard started slipping away. Ted Green, considered expendable, wound up with the New England Whalers of the WHA; scrappy John McKenzie jumped to Philadelphia of the "other league"—as the NHL preferred to call it—and flakey, flamboyant Derek Sanderson went with him; Ed Westfall was drafted by the Islanders; and, most disastrous of all, goalie Gerry Cheevers set up housekeeping in front of the Cleveland Crusaders' nets.

Before 1972–73 was over, Sinden was back and Schmidt was moving toward the exit which, at the end of the campaign, would be his gateway to the new Washington, D.C., franchise; Johnson was ousted in favor of Armand "Bep" Guidolin, coach of the Bruins' AHL farm team, the Boston Braves; Sanderson was cut loose by the Blazers and was welcomed back to Beantown; and Jacques Plante became a straw thrown by Toronto and grasped at by the Bruins.

For a while Plante held fast in the Boston goal; Bobby Orr's gimpy knee seemed trouble-free; and Guidolin's tough practices gave the rollicking Bears some needed discipline. They passed the Rangers to finish second but in the first round of the playoffs, Orr was neutralized, Plante was demoralized by long bombs and Phil Esposito's knee was fragmentized by a Ron Harris bodycheck. The Rangers won in five and the dynasty became more fling than Ming.

Chicago Black Hawks

WRITERS HESITATE to let the facts fracture a good story, but debunking charming legends is the sacred duty of researchers bound to place the National Hockey League in its most accurate perspective.

One of the hardiest yarns in hockey is the Curse of the Muldoon, all about the sorcery and witchcraft a soremouthed loser is said to have invoked to prevent Chicago Black Hawks from ever finishing first in the NHL.

The Hawks finally won their first pennant in 41 years in 1966–67, and there was defiant rejoicing at the final rejection of the Curse. The authors, ever gimlet-eyed, wish to knock off that whimsy. There never was any Curse of the Muldoon, except in the nimble imagination of James X. Coleman, the great kidder among Canadian sports columnists.

More than 20 years ago, Coleman was sitting at his desk in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. He was burdened with the task of composing a column for the early editions.

He sat staring vacantly at the blank copy paper in his typewriter while the clock's hands moved inexorably toward deadline. The fate he had feared for years had overtaken him at last. The dread day had arrived when he had nothing to write—no lances to splinter, no gags, no quips, no fragment of an idea freshly minted or slightly used.

Coleman sat groping, squirming, straining, and his palms grew moist with nervousness. He ripped the paper from his typewriter,

rolled in new sheets and glowered at them. Time marched, but nothing else.

It was 26 minutes to the first edition. His desperate thoughts landed on the Black Hawks, who had exhibited their customary hilarious act of teetering on the brink of first place, then toppled with unseemly haste into second, or lower. Inspiration filled Coleman's agitated mental vat.

"I got it!" he hollered at Ralph Adams, who was presiding over the sports copy desk.

"I hope you've got a column," Adams muttered. "The boys in the composing room are asking whether you think we're putting out a weekly or what."

"I got it!" Coleman repeated. "I'll write that the reason the Hawks never finish first is that Pete Muldoon put a curse on 'em!"

Adams was properly skeptical. "It's an addlebrained notion that nobody will believe," he said. "But it might stand up for one edition, if you get a lucky bounce."

When it is 26 minutes to deadline, the last frayed thread is about to break and plunge the sword of Damocles in a hack's back. In tight, the sportswriter throws nothing back. Coleman typed feverishly:

> The Hawks are victims of a hex Pete Muldoon put on them many years ago, after he was fired as coach. He had a stormy session with Major Frederic McLaughlin, the strange eccentric who owned the Hawks when they were admitted to the NHL in 1926.
>
> Muldoon coached the Hawks to a third-place finish in their first year, but McLaughlin was not impressed. "This team was good enough to be first," he said.
>
> Muldoon was amazed at McLaughlin's criticism, but not to the point of shutting up. "You're crazy!" he fumed.
>
> McLaughlin was outraged by such heresy. "You're fired!" he roared.
>
> Muldoon flared back in a black Irish snit. "Fire me, Major, and you'll never finish first! I'll put a curse on this team that will hoodoo it till the end of time!"
>
> And so, kiddies, that's why the Hawks always fail to grab the flag in the NHL. They cannot beat the Curse of the Muldoon . . .

The fiction caught on, perhaps to the amazement of Jim Coleman. The Curse of the Muldoon became an entertaining chapter in the folk literature of hockey, often paraded as fact by romantic writers

on the beat. Coleman teased it along with an annual reprinting of the story of Muldoon's black magic.

The authors hate to be meddlesome belittlers, but the facts are a trifle less fanciful. There was a Pete Muldoon and he did coach the Hawks in 1926–27, but reliable informants say he never cussed, let alone cursed, in his whole antiseptic life. There was a Major McLaughlin, a millionaire coffee baron and husband of a movie actress named Irene Castle, and he was eccentric. He had the ludicrous notion in 1926, for example, that natives of the United States with such unlikely names as Ike Klingbeil and Fido Purpur could play in the NHL.

Muldoon died a few years ago in Seattle, apparently without knowledge of Coleman's curse. McLaughlin died without witnessing the Hawks finish first. But in 1967 the Hawks did it for the first and only time, and, in the interests of accuracy, the Muldoon Myth can be mercifully shut down.

Major McLaughlin was roused into hockey in 1926 by Lester Patrick, when the Old Silver Fox was peddling the Pacific Coast Hockey League to Eastern enthusiasts. McLaughlin did not know a hole in the ground from the usual comparison about hockey, but he obligingly gave Patrick $200,000 for the Portland Rosebuds. The Portland package included Dick Irvin, Mickey Mackay, George Hay, Rabbit McVeigh, Percy Traub and Bob Trapp.

McLaughlin was a prominent American polo player in his blue-blooded youth and, in maturity as a hockey owner, refused to become unhorsed. He was always riding to battle with his coaches, hiring and firing them on frantic whim.

The Hawks finished third in the American Division in their first season, behind Rangers and Boston, but McLaughlin detached the robes of authority from Coach Muldoon. He replaced Muldoon, to start the 1927–28 season, with Barney Stanley, who had played in the West at Vancouver, Calgary, Regina and Edmonton.

The Hawks, under Stanley's administration, were wretched. They won seven games out of 44 in 1927–28 and Stanley professed to be perplexed. One afternoon, disgusted, he walked into McLaughlin's office in the cavernous Chicago Stadium. "For the life of me," Stanley said, "I don't know what's the matter with this team."

The Major hardly raised his aristocratic eyes from the paper he was reading. "If you really want to find out quick what's wrong," he snapped, "take a look in the first mirror you come to!"

From that thorny point, McLaughlin went through coaches faster

than Bobby Hull can whap a slapshot. Or, to be accurate, much faster. Chicago coaches met each other getting on and off trains; McLaughlin did everything except install a revolving door in the Stadium to hasten their departure.

Edward Fitkin, who now flacks publicity for Los Angeles Kings, once observed: "For a coffee king, McLaughlin sure had caffeine nerves."

The Major at least had an uncontrollable itch in his trigger finger. He shot down 13 coaches in his first 10 years in the NHL, hiring three and firing two of them in 1932–33. He successively employed Godfrey Matheson, Emil Iverson and Tommy Gorman that season, dismissing the first two with ample provocation. Matheson, a Winnipeg opportunist and comic, was a hilarious choice. When goalkeeper Charlie Gardiner was injured and unable to practice, Matheson used a dressmaker's dummy in his place.

Frank Patrick, working for Boston in the early thirties, once asked a Chicago forward, Johnny Gottselig, "Who would you say was the worst coach you ever had in Chicago?"

"I don't know," Gottselig said. "I'd say it was a photofinish between a half a dozen of them."

Tommy Gorman, a knowing hustler from Ottawa, coached the Hawks to a semblance of respectability in 1933–34, when they won the first of two Stanley Cups under Major McLaughlin's bizarre ownership. The Hawks ended the regular schedule in second place behind Detroit in the American Division, then eliminated the Montreal Canadiens and Montreal Maroons in successive playoff series to reach the Cup final. They subdued the Red Wings three games to one, principally because of goalie Gardiner's heroics.

Gardiner was a cocky Hibernian, born in Edinburgh, Scotland, and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He had suffered from notorious nonsupport with the Hawks since 1927, the only reputable Chicago representative through two seasons when the team won only 14 and tied 11 of 88 games. Gardiner was the league's all-star goalkeeper in 1930–31, 1931–32 and again in 1933–34, Chicago's first championship year and his last. In eight Stanley Cup games, Gardiner lost one, tied one, and achieved two shutouts for a stingily spectacular goals-against average of 1.5.

Although the Hawks had suffered regularly at the hands of Red Wings in Detroit for years, when they opened for a final series in the Olympia on April 3, 1934, they hiked eyebrows up into hairlines by winning 2–1. They repeated two nights later, 4–1. The series switched to Chicago and, before 17,700 fans, Detroit's Herbie Lewis, Larry Aurie and Ebbie Goodfellow temporarily restored Gardiner to the mortals. They beat him, 5–2. The fourth game required 30 minutes and five seconds of overtime before Mush March scored the Cup-winning goal for Chicago, on a pass from Doc Romnes. Detroit's Goodfellow was serving a penalty when March's shot turned the Hawk partisans wild.

The next day, high on jubilation, Gardiner was gleefully wheeled through the Chicago Loop by Roger Jenkins, a teammate. Jenkins was paying off a bet: he had bet Gardiner he couldn't stop the Wings.

Two months later, on June 13, Gardiner was wheeled into an operating room in a Winnipeg hospital. It was too late to save his life, at 30, from a brain hemorrhage.

Bill Tobin, the squat, gray man who managed the Hawks for 30 years, would say, "Hockey was Gardiner's life." Tobin, the manager, was known as Mysterious Mister T, the great little what-is-it of the Hawks. He was an agile broken-field runner who outlasted a generation of managerial contemporaries; coaches were constantly purged but he always survived the perils of running a habitually brutal team.

Baz O'Meara wrote in the Montreal *Star* after Tobin died in 1963: "Tobin was the warp and woof of hockey." But while he woofed, the Hawks warped. They had the most lamentable record in NHL history until Tommy Ivan replaced Tobin as manager 13 years ago.

Tobin's survival depended on his tolerance for the addled notions of his superiors. In 1938 he went along, very straight faced, with an odd order from Major McLaughlin. "Ice me a team of all American players," McLaughlin demanded. Tobin obliged, instead of counseling against making the Hawks a bigger joke than they were. Chicago's All-American roster included Mike Karakas from Aurora, Minnesota, Bun LaPrarie from Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, Milt Brink, Al Soumi and Butch Schaeffer from Eveleth, Minnesota, and Ike Klingbeil from Hancock, Michigan. They won one game in six—they whipped New York Rangers—before sanity prevailed and McLaughlin abandoned his America First scheme.

In the 11 seasons between 1946–47 and 1956–57, the Hawks were a lame wing that drooped in last place nine times. Tobin blandly blamed the conditions on the refusal of other clubs to deal with Chicago. "Unmitigated nonsense!" Conn Smythe of Toronto said in

1954. "The Hawks have had a chance to buy players from us, but Tobin is so cheap that he wouldn't pay 10 cents to see the Statue of Liberty take a swan dive into New York Harbor." Tobin probably was all the things they said about him at his funeral—affable, genial, inoffensive. Smythe's critique suggested that as a hockey executive, however, he was a splendid gin rummy player.

The Hawks won their second Cup in 1938 in outrageous circumstances cut to fit their flaky proprietor. They were a remote third in the American Division, winners of a mere 14 games, 30 points behind the first-place Boston Bruins.

Alex Levinsky, a Toronto furniture dealer, played defense for Chicago then, and he remembers: "We were so bad that I thought we'd be eliminated in our first playoff series by the Canadiens. So I packed all my clothes in my car and sent my wife home to Toronto." Levinsky laughed as old athletes do when the glow of old upsets are on them: "But we kept winning and I was still living out of the car a month later."

The Hawks beat the Canadiens two games to one, after losing the first of a three-game series. They subdued New York Americans, after losing the first of another three-game series. That qualified them, stumbling and hiccuping, to play Toronto in the best-of-five final. They were 10-to-1 longshots against a Maple Leaf squad which banished the powerful Bruins in three successive games.

The Hawks were coached by Bill Stewart, an irascible egomaniac whom McLaughlin recruited from the ranks of referees and umpires. Stewart refereed in the NHL for nine seasons and began umpiring in the National League in 1933. He was a native of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, the only native American to coach a team in the NHL.

Paul Thompson was an ornament among the Chicago zircons in 1938, allied with Earl Seibert, Johnny Gottselig, Lou Trudell, Doc Romnes, Levinsky, Carl Voss and Mike Karakas. But historians most remember a very substitute goalkeeper named Alfred Moore.

The Hawks reeled into the final without goaler Karakas, whose big toe had been broken in the series against New York Americans. Bill Stewart sought to replace him with Dave Kerr, a superb player with New York Rangers, but Conn Smythe said the hell with that.

Kerr did dress with the Hawks shortly before the first game in Toronto, but Smythe vetoed him as a substitute. Stewart blew one of his celebrated fuses. He seized the butcher knife which the players used to cut tape for their sticks and ran to the door.

"Where's that sonofabitch Smythe? I'll murder him!" Stewart was tackled before he could make the door, knocked down by Levinsky, a former Leaf. Stewart would argue later, and until he died four years ago, that he had been assaulted by ruffians in blue Toronto jerseys.

The Hawks, loudly agitated, then reluctantly accepted Alf Moore as a substitute goalie. He was a modest minor leaguer who had spent the season in Pittsburgh and returned home to Toronto.

Legend, the sort of nonsense that surrounds the Hawks, suggests that Stewart obtained Moore from a Toronto beer hall, where Alfred was wetting an enormous thirst. "Who, me?" Moore is supposed to have said, puzzled and gently burping back beer fumes when Stewart beckoned.

"Yes, you," Stewart muttered. "Unfortunately."

The Chicago players shared Stewart's disgust as Moore dragged on cumbersome equipment. Lou Trudell looked up from tying his skates and grumbled, "Why did it have to be you?"

"Beg pardon?" Moore said, allegedly full of hops. "I believe I will stone them."

The Leafs conned Moore for an early goal, but, head clearing and aided by a strong defense, he blunted every other Toronto thrust. He thwarted the Leafs by a 3–1 majority, to the vast delight of beer drinkers.

Turk Broda was the Toronto goalie that spring, still professing to be stunned by his rival's performance. "We threw everything at old Alf but the building," Broda insists.

Moore, delighted, had a rebuttal for jeering fans in the building. After the game ended, he thumbed his nose at the Toronto bench.

Moore, gray and sober 31 years later, gives lie to the barroom myth. "I'd been asked to attend the game by the Hawks, so they must have known they were in trouble for a goalkeeper." The Leafs, through the recalcitrant Smythe, prompted NHL President Frank Calder to rule Moore ineligible for the remainder of the series. "I wasn't unhappy about that," Moore says. "I guess I was happy. I'd had my moment."

Coach Stewart, forced to seek another reserve goalie for the second game, found someone named Paul Goodman. He was found—and no one ever denied it—2½ hours before the game in a movie theater. Goodman was not so good, beaten 5–1 as Toronto tied the series. Three days later, when the series switched to Chicago, Mike Karakas's broken toe was repaired sufficiently for him to play goal.

The third game was tied 1–1 when Doc Romnes untied it for Chicago at 15:55 of the third period. The Leafs protested that the shot hit a goalpost but the referee, a gimlet-eyed fellow named Clarence Campbell, ruled the puck went in the net. A Chicago mob of 18,946, gratified at the 2–1 triumph, cheered the man who would become NHL president in 1946.

The fourth game was a 4–1 romp for the Hawks, an easy conquest on goals by Cully Dahlstrom, Carl Voss, Jack Shill and Mush March. Karakas, the wounded goalie, was carried off by his jubilant teammates. Bill Stewart skidded across the ice, hollering in the codfish accents of New England, the lights reflecting off his bald head.

Paul Thompson, an all-star left wing that year and now a cattle rancher in Kamloops, British Columbia, has an explanation for the outcome of the chaotic series. "There are some fanciful stories about Moore and Stewart," Thompson says, "but we really won the Cup by roughing up Red Horner."

Horner was the herd sire of the Toronto defense, a bullish competitor of immense wrath. In the first game he cross-checked Doc Romnes and fractured his nose in six places. In the third and fourth games, in Chicago, the Hawks retaliated. "We cut Horner down," Thompson said, "Chicago gangland style."

Bill Stewart, the victorious coach, discovered that glory was indeed fleeting when a man worked for Major McLaughlin. The next season, when the Hawks sank to their customary subterranean level, Stewart was fired. Thompson replaced him and held the job, with indifferent success, until 1944.

Thompson's administration was distinguished by the recruiting of the Bentley brothers, Doug and Max, from the Canadian prairies. They were ponies in a game where it is wiser to bet on horses, but each made it to the individual winner's enclosure: Doug won the scoring championship with 73 points in 1943, Max won it twice, back to back in 1946 and 1947, with respective totals of 61 and 72 points.

But between 1943–44, when they lost the Stanley Cup in four straight games to the Canadiens, and 1960–61, when they beat Detroit in six, the Hawks did not qualify for the Cup final. It was a long time between champagne cocktails and there were years in the late forties and the early fifties when it seemed the Chicago franchise would fold. The club's financial turmoil settled when the junior Jim Norris saved the operation in 1952.

Norris's influence in the NHL—because of his family's interest in Detroit, Chicago and New York—was enormous. He bought players and extracted favors from his NHL partners, particularly from Conn Smythe of Toronto and Frank Selke of Montreal, who received help from Norris in their horse-racing ventures. "Norris saved the game in Chicago," Smythe insisted at Big Jim's funeral in 1966. He saved it by pouring $2,000,000 into the Black Hawks, to resurrect them from the verge of extinction in 1953 to the Stanley Cup in 1961. They were drawing fewer than 4,000 fans a game before Norris funneled funds and enthusiasm into the franchise.

The Chicago fans, boisterous at the best of times, were loud and derisive in the worst of times. They used to wait for Norris to leave Chicago Stadium so they could pelt him with abuse. He customarily holed up, after grievous defeats, in the dressing room. Tommy Ivan, the thoughtful, dapper general manager, sat with him. "Think the fans have gone now?" Norris would say after a half hour of mourning. If Ivan said yes, they took the long walk up the street to their cars.

Norris was given, in convivial moments, to extravagant gestures. In 1962, in a Toronto hotel room where the bartender was working overtime, he offered $1,000,000 for Frank Mahovlich, the former Maple Leaf left wing. The deal aborted after the principal Toronto owners—John Bassett, Harold Ballard and Stafford Smythe—could not agree to give up their superstar. That the offer was made at all illustrates the casual side of a very rich man's son, one who was once revered as the chief tentacle of Octopus, Inc., the monopolistic International Boxing Club.

Big Jim was indifferent to his huge inheritance. "I hope you don't think I built up the family fortune," he told one interviewer. "I'm doing my best to dissipate it." This careless attitude may have caused his problems with the IBC, grimy circumstances that eventually prompted the United States Supreme Court to abolish the IBC as a cartel in restraint of trade.

"Getting into boxing was the worst thing that ever happened to me," Norris testified before a Senate subcommittee. That was in 1960, after he admitted catering to Frankie Carbo, a mysterious underworld figure who owned pieces of 50 to 100 important fighters, among them two middleweight champions and a lightweight champion. "Carbo was the expediter," Norris admitted. "He convinced several big-name fighters to perform on the IBC's televised shows."

Whatever his conduct of boxing, Norris was a factor for good in the NHL. He had strong, abiding ties with hockey since childhood.

"Racing is pure luck," he once said. "In boxing, the outcome has nothing to do with the promoter. But hockey—it's a team sport where psychology and desire are half the game."

It is a team sport, but the Hawks' success during Norris's jurisdiction depended on several key players. They won the Cup in 1961 because Bobby Hull, Stan Mikita, Pierre Pilote and goalie Glenn Hall were arriving into stirring primes. Hull, Mikita and Pilote had graduated from the St. Catharines (Ontario) Teepees, a thriving junior farm operated for the Hawks by Rudy Pilous. His reward, in 1957, was to succeed Ivan as coach, the twenty-fourth in 30 years.

Pilous lasted until 1963, removed from authority after repeated failures to finish first. The Hawks missed by one point in 1962–63, beaten out of the pennant by Toronto. Several players expressed disenchantment with Pilous, particularly Eric Nesterenko, a taciturn right wing. "Pilous," Nesterenko grumbled, on the record, "couldn't coach a girl's softball team."

Such insurrection cost Pilous his job, which Norris and Ivan gave to Billy Reay, who had successfully coached Chicago's pro farm in Buffalo. "D'you have any advice for me?" Reay asked Pilous when they met at a Montreal race track in the summer of 1963.

"Yes," Pilous said. "Be goddamn sure you finish first."

Reay finally managed it, in 1966–67. Major McLaughlin was dead by then, as were Bill Tobin and Jim Norris; and the Hawks were owned by Arthur Wirtz, who had been a partner in the IBC. The Curse of the Muldoon was at last kicked off a wharf into Lake Michigan.

A year later the Hawks began to sag, mainly because Ivan traded Phil Esposito, Ken Hodge and Fred Stanfield to Boston for Gilles Marotte, Pit Martin and a minor-league goalie named Jack Norris. The three ex-Hawks, all young forwards, were responsible for the big Boston surge last winter. The rangy Esposito set an NHL record for points in a single season, 126.

Now, when hockey men watch Ivan pass by, they marvel, "There goes the guy who made a monster out of Boston."

But despite the Bruins' rise, the Black Hawks weren't dead for long. They miraculously finished first in the East Division in 1970 and then were transferred to the West Division in 1970–71 and finished on top once more. They wiped out Philadelphia in four straight games of the opening round of the 1971 playoffs; took the Rangers in an exhausting seven-game, semifinal set; and succumbed to the Canadiens in the seventh game of the final series.

In 1971–72 and 1972–73 Chicago continued to dominate the West Division although the victory margin over second place Philadelphia was only eight points in the latter season. This coincided with the migration of Bobby Hull to the Winnipeg Jets of the World Hockey Association in the summer of 1972. With Hull, however, they were eliminated in four straight games by the Rangers in the 1972 playoffs. Without him in 1973 the Hawks went through St. Louis in five and calmly strangled the Rangers in the same number, even though they lost the first game at home. They uncovered a fine rookie defenseman in Phil Russell; Pit Martin continued to prove that they had at least gotten one player in the Phil Esposito deal; Tony Esposito flopped and stumbled and kept the puck out; and Dennis Hull, out of his big brother's shadow, skated brilliantly.

Then came the Canadiens and, although the Hawks fought with great heart including a back-to-the-wall, 8–7 triumph in the highest scoring game of modern Cup history, they bowed to the Flying Frenchmen in six games. With the score tied, 4–4, in the last period of the final encounter they could have used the kind of *big* goal that the Golden Jet supplied them with for so many years.

Detroit Red Wings

JACK ADAMS was five weeks short of 73 when he slumped over his desk in Detroit on May 2, 1968, dead of a heart attack. It was appropriate that in the end John James Adams was doing best what he cared about most. He was absorbed in hockey, in charge of the Central Professional League, still caught up in the game that transported him from Fort William, Ontario, to the Hall of Fame on the shore of Lake Ontario, in Toronto. The distance isn't far in miles, but few qualify for the trip.

Adams was among the advance men who blazed the NHL to a big-league level—combative, bold, frank, cussed, big-headed and amiable, one with Art Ross and Lester Patrick and Tommy Gorman, with Dick Irvin and Leo Dandurand and Frank Selke and Conn Smythe. Only Selke and Smythe are left from those puck pioneers.

All of the little universe of hockey in the twentieth century was contained in Adams's mind and interwoven with his life. It wasn't simply that Jack "knew them all," as they say of certain men of vintage. Adams influenced them all; he reacted on them, and they on him. He discovered stars, or invented them. He rose above issues or ignored them, or turned them inside out. He thought loyalty was a two-way street for management and players alike, which is why he helped stifle the first players association in 1957.

But what completed the picture for Jack's intimates was an irreverence that kept himself in perspective. "Let me tell you about the old Vancouver Millionaires," he would say. "A bad hockey team, and I was one of its bad players." He may have been giving

himself all the worst of his athletic assessment. In three seasons in Vancouver, 1920 through 1922, he led the Pacific Coast Hockey Association once in penalties and once in goals.

After 1927 Adams guided the Detroit franchise through 35 seasons, to 12 first-place finishes and seven Stanley Cups. In one tyrannical span—from 1949 to 1955—the Red Wings finished first seven successive times, an athletic success unsurpassed by even baseball's New York Yankees in their dominant years. Adams would bristle like a new broom when the inevitable comparisons were made between the Wings and the Yankees. "We are not the Yankees of hockey," he would insist. "The Yankees are the Red Wings of baseball."

Detroit was admitted to the NHL in 1926 when a syndicate purchased the Victoria Cougars for $100,000. The club's president was Charles Hughes, a prominent member of the Detroit Athletic Club. For their money, the partners obtained players like Frank Fredrickson, Frank Foyston, Clem Laughlin, Art Duncan, Jack Walker, Slim Halderson and Frank Sheppard. Of that motley squad, Fredrickson, Foyston and Walker have been admitted to the Hall of Fame.

Duncan inspired the Cougars to a last-place finish in the American Division of the NHL, winners of 10 games in 44. The team played across the Detroit River in Windsor, Ontario, because construction of the Olympia in Detroit was not finished. By the spring of 1927 the Cougars were frantic for fresh money and new managerial talent. They had blown $84,000 at the gate; they were targets for scorn at home and contumely on the road.

Meanwhile, Adams, retired as a player at 32, had helped Dave Gill manage Ottawa Senators to a Stanley Cup triumph over Boston Bruins. Frank Calder, the mild, stocky NHL president, approached him with a proposition. "I think Detroit might be looking for a firebrand like you," he said. "I'll phone Charles Hughes and set up an appointment."

Adams would reveal, long after: "When I walked in to see Hughes, I had a psychological advantage. I was no cap-in-hand applicant for employment. He had finished last and lost a ton of money, and I'd been involved in winning the Stanley Cup. I told him he needed me more than I needed him—and he agreed."

The Detroit franchise hit the skids before the bottom fell out of the world's economy in the crash of 1929. The Cougars were lucky, Adams recalled, if they attracted 80,000 fans a year, not all of them paid. "One night in 1930," Adams said, "we played an exhibition

game for some charity run by Frank Murphy, the Detroit mayor. It was a cash collection, pay what you could. Just before the game started we heard there was a guy driving up and down Woodward Avenue outside the Olympia. He had five bags of potatoes and wanted in. We took his spuds and gave him standing room."

The club's name was changed from Cougars to Falcons after a newspaper competition to pick a new tag, but the team remained depressed. They traveled on day coaches and browsed on cheese sandwiches wrapped in wax paper. Frank Sheppard, one of the non-descript forwards, told Adams he had figured a way to retire in luxury. "I'll open a string of hot-dog stands where the train stops," Sheppard said, drooling at the prospect. "The crummy meals you guys eat, I'll be rich."

"We were this depressed," Adams once said. "If Howie Morenz, the great Montreal star, had been available for $1.98, we couldn't have afforded him."

The Falcons had one respectable season in their first eight—1933–34, the year they finished first in the American Division, beat Toronto in a semifinal playoff to qualify for the Cup final, then lost in four games to Chicago's Black Hawks. The Falcons retreated to the cosy womb of last place the next season, and, in the spring of 1935, Adams was in Montreal watching the Maroons beat Toronto for the Cup. He got in conversation with Frank Patrick, his old boss in Vancouver who was then presiding over the Boston Bruins.

"If I had Cooney Weiland," Patrick said, mentioning Detroit's nifty center, "Boston would be in this final."

"If I had Marty Barry," Adams retorted, in reference to Boston's big, dour center, "Detroit would win the Stanley Cup."

The deal was made; "Big stuff," Adams recalled, "between two freewheeling paupers."

It is fashionable for hockey operators to say of a swap that "it was a trade that helped both teams." It is not always true, but the Weiland-for-Barry barter indeed assisted both Boston and Detroit. Weiland became the pivot between Dutch Gainor and Dit Clapper on Boston's Dynamite Trio. Barry was inserted between Larry Aurie and Herbie Lewis to form the set of forwards chiefly responsible for Detroit's first Stanley Cup triumph, in 1935–36.

Adams was unaware of prosperity around the corner, however, until he arrived at his office in the Olympia one April morning in 1935. The rink was in receivership and there were rumors the Falcons would collapse.

The girl on the switchboard had a big smile on her, for no reason Adams could fathom.

"There's a call for you from Chicago," she told Jack. "The new owner wants to talk to you."

"New owner? Of this club? Who?"

"Mr. James Norris," the switchboard operator said. "The large grain millionaire."

"Adams?" a gruff voice said, when Jack got connected to Norris. "I'll be in Detroit this afternoon. Meet me with the bankers when I take over that lousy club." James D. Norris, Sr., always spoke in such autocratic fashion, in a firm, crisp tone of voice which suggested that if you cared to argue, you would do him a favor by arguing with someone else. Adams, habitually argumentative, did not quarrel with his new boss.

"I remember that afternoon Norris took over," Adams said, after the old wheat baron died in 1952. "He was bald and he had heavy black eyebrows and a round face. His nose was broad and flat, like somebody had hit it."

Norris was a 56-year-old czar of commerce when he purchased the Falcons, but he had always had an interest in hockey that began when he was a boy in Montreal. Norris had played for a team inspirationally called the Montreal Winged Wheelers as a young man and, in the middle of the depression, defied the NHL by operating an outlaw league for two years in Chicago. As a millionaire, he built a rink on his estate at Lake Forest, Ill., where every chauffeur Norris hired had to be able to skate so he could play hockey with the kids.

"We'll call this team the Wings," Norris informed Adams on the first day they met. "In fact, we'll call it Red Wings. Our emblem will be a winged wheel, which ought to sit good with Henry Ford and the Detroit car people." He fixed Adams with a sharp gaze. "And I'll give you a year on your job—on probation."

Adams never signed a contract with Norris and came, in relaxed moments, to call him Pops. "Pops was the bankroll and the boss and after he took over, Detroit hockey never looked back."

The dynasty was begun quickly in the 1935–36 season. Adams coaxed Norris into buying Syd Howe from St. Louis Flyers for $35,000, a lavish price at the time, and encouraged spending about $17,000 to acquire Hec Kilrea from Toronto. The Wings won the American Division and whipped Toronto three games to one for Detroit's first conquest of the Stanley Cup.

They repeated in 1936–37, the first team to finish first and win the Cup in two consecutive seasons. They achieved the prize in spite of crippling injuries, reduced to nine players in beating New York Rangers for the Cup. A journeyman goalie recruited from New York Americans, Earl Robertson, was a prominent replacement for the injured Normie Smith.

Adams believed the Wings of Aurie, Barry and Lewis, of Syd Howe, Ebbie Goodfellow, Johnny Sorrell, Hec Kilrea, Bucko McDonald and Mud Bruneteau were good enough to last. "I stood pat," Adams admitted after they finished last in 1937–38, "and I should have been dealing. After this flop, I'll never hesitate to bust up championship clubs."

The Wings did not qualify for the Cup final again until 1942, and then Adams sustained what he called "the bitterest blow" of his career. They won the first three games of a best-of-seven final and were leading the fourth game with 15 minutes to play, when the Leafs rebounded to win four straight games. It was the greatest comeback or worst collapse, depending on your sentiments, in Stanley Cup history.

In the fourth game, Adams always insisted, the Wings were victims of incredibly inefficient refereeing by the official, Mel Harwood. The Wings lost the pivotal fourth game, 4–3, yielding two goals in the last 15 minutes. Afterward, the embattled Harwood was surrounded by three riled Detroit players—Grosso, Eddie Wares and Sid Abel. Adams skidded across the ice to join them.

"Jack was only going to protect the referee," said young Jim Norris, then a vice-president of the Wings. Norris's tongue was tucked firmly in his clean-shaven cheek.

Adams was charged with hitting the referee, although he protested, not quietly: "I didn't get within 10 feet of that guy!"

Calder, the NHL president, repudiated Adams's protest by suspending him for the balance of the series. Grosso and Wares were fined $100 each for abusing the referee. Thus clipped, the Wings subsided in the last three games, beaten four games to three in Toronto's rousing reversal.

"To me," Adams would say, much later, "the 1942 series was controlled by the Toronto papers and Conn Smythe. They influenced Calder into favoring the Leafs."

Adams kept needling Calder the next time the governors convened, in the summer of 1942. "You're through persecuting me!" he hollered at the man who had suggested, 17 years before, that he

apply for a job in Detroit. "I'm through being your goddamn patsy!" Adams always believed that his protest insured that Detroit subsequently received even breaks from referees. Calder, whom the public believed could be intimidated by domineering governors like Smythe and Adams, died before completion of the 1942–43 season. He did not live to witness the Wings, led by Abel and Carl Liscombe, subdue Boston Bruins in four successive games in the Cup final.

Toronto and Montreal, with stronger farm systems and fewer players in World War II, dominated the NHL in the late forties. The Wings weren't back to win the Cup until 1949–50 when, in a rigorous seven-game final, they beat Rangers four games to three.

"That series," Adams praised, "gave my kind of player a chance to shine. I mean guys like Sid Abel, with the hard glow of dedication." Abel had been a left winger before the war, but when he came back Adams shifted him to center ice. "Sid had bad legs but lots of heart, so I put him in a position where he wouldn't have to do all the driving skating along the wing."

Detroit came down to the last game of the 1950 final tied three games each with the aroused Rangers. Abel was playing between Ted Lindsay and Gerry Couture, missing Gordie Howe who had been critically injured in a semifinal against Toronto.

"Abel was clearly played out," Adams said. "But late in the game, when he was knocked down, he still managed to score the tying goal on his knees. That kept us alive, and Pete Babando came off the bench to score the winning goal in the twenty-eighth minute of overtime."

Abel subsequently coached Chicago Black Hawks in 1952–53 and 1953–54, then returned to the Wings as coach in the last years of Adams' administration. When Adams was relieved of command in 1963, Abel succeeded him. Adams did not like it much.

Tommy Ivan, whose surname was pruned from Ivanoff, was the Detroit coach in the 1949–50 championship. He is a neat, agile man, five inches over five feet, who came up through the Red Wing system in the same fashion as a player is groomed. Ivan's playing career ended as a young amateur in Brantford, Ontario, when a puck smashed his face. He stayed in the town as the coach of a kids team, then joined the Detroit organization as coach of their juniors in the Ontario towns of Guelph and Galt. Ivan served in the Canadian army in World War II, then graduated to Detroit's pro farm at Omaha, Nebraska. He was boosted to the Indianapolis Capi-

tals in the American League in 1946–47 and tapped to replace Adams, by Adams himself, as bench boss of the Wings in 1947–48.

"Adams," Ivan says, "is the best thing that ever happened to me." He continued to feel that way even after leaving the Wings in 1954 to become general manager of the Black Hawks, in one of the wholesale manipulations of personnel by the Norris family between Detroit and Chicago.

The Red Wings under Ivan were the young Wings of Terry Sawchuk, Red Kelly, Ted Lindsay, Alex Delvecchio and the great Howe. They practiced early in the mornings, on Ivan's cunning theory that "If you get them up early enough, they'll get to bed early enough."

The Detroit farms were producing big-league players by the platoon 20 years ago, and castoffs for Chicago by the brigade. In the four-year period between 1950 and 1954, the Hawks siphoned 19 players plus Ivan from the Wings.

Detroit prospects were surrounded at tender ages. For example, scout Bob Kinnear spotted goalie Terry Sawchuk in East Kildonan, Manitoba, when Sawchuk was 14. The late Fred Pinckney stumbled upon Howe in a Saskatoon schoolyard when Howe was a gangly 13. Carson Cooper recruited the graceful Kelly and combative Lindsay from St. Michael's College in Toronto, a few blocks from the rink of the Maple Leafs. "The boys were so young when they came to the Wings," Adams used to say, "that when I came home from a trip they would rush up to me yelling, 'Daddy! Daddy! What did you bring me?' "

The Wings always finished first in the early fifties and in 1951–52, in a stunning display, they won the Stanley Cup in the minimum number of eight games. Goalie Sawchuk—supported by a defense of Kelly, Leo Reise and Bob Goldham—yielded five goals in eight trouncings of Toronto and Montreal. Four of his conquests were shutouts, responsible for the picayune average of 0.62 goals per game against him. No goalkeeper has ever frustrated playoff opponents in such stingy fashion.

Adams loudly contended that Howe was the greatest all-round player he ever saw. "I'm a strong admirer of Rocket Richard," a reference to Montreal's flaming competitor, "but for pure versatility, high purpose and team contribution, My Guy is the greatest." Adams cited Howe's unselfishness in the 1951–52 season as characteristic. "He was going for 50 goals to tie Rocket's record, so I told Ivan to

use him a lot in our last few games. But Gordie kept passing the puck to Abel. Finally Tommy asked him what he was up to."

Howe drawled in his slow, laconic way, "Oh, Ol' Boot has a bonus for getting 20 goals, y'know," using Abel's nickname, Bootnose. "If he's in front of the net, I'm gonna give him the puck."

They both missed their marks. Abel got 17 goals and Howe was stopped at 47. He would get 49 the next season but, for all his uncommon power and talent, Howe never reached 50.

Howe is the one Wing that Adams guaranteed a job in Detroit as long as he could lace up skates. Adams made similar promises to others of his "boys," notably Ted Lindsay and Red Kelly, but they departed after celebrated rifts with their cantankerous mentor.

Lindsay, scarred and rebellious, was shuffled to Chicago in 1957 after he attempted to organize the first NHL players association. Adams considered Lindsay's union activity a disloyal act against the we're-all-chums-together attitude management preferred. "When Lindsay came to us from Toronto he was a fine boy," Adams protested. "He and Howe and Abel made a great forward line. But as he got older, it became a question of whether he was going to run the team or I was. So," with a dismissing wave of the hand, "I shipped him to Chicago." Lindsay played three years for the Hawks and did not return to Detroit until after Adams was dismissed in 1963. Then, 39 and returning for a last Red Wing hurrah, Lindsay came back to play one more year for Sid Abel. He scored 14 goals in Detroit's rush to first place in 1964–65.

Kelly was in his thirteenth season with the Wings when Adams let him go in 1960. He appeared to be slumping as a defenseman and Adams tried to trade him to New York for Bill Gadsby. Kelly refused to join the Rangers. Adams, convinced Kelly was through, then swapped him to Toronto for Marc Reaume, a journeyman defenseman. The Kelly swap did nothing to elevate Adams' seventh sense of managerial genius. In Toronto, working for Coach Punch Imlach, Kelly switched from defense to center ice and helped the Leafs win four Stanley Cups. He also served two terms in the Canadian parliament as the Liberal member for the Toronto constituency of York West.

Adams was jolted emotionally when Pops Norris died in 1952, but he slipped into a smooth arrangement with Marguerite Ann Norris, 26-year-old daughter of the old grain merchant. Just before the old gentleman's death, some skeptics were asking questions

about Norris's NHL monopoly. "The NHL," Jim Coleman scoffed in the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, "stands for Norris House League."

On the surface, at least, Norris did seem to be seizing controls of other teams besides the Wings. He owned chunks of Chicago Stadium, where the Black Hawks played, and Madison Square Garden, home of the Rangers. Prior to the death of the senior Jim Norris, however, the family attempted to clarify the muddled situation. Young Jim, then president of the International Boxing Club, gave up his financial interest in the Red Wings. He joined his younger brother, Bruce, and Arthur Wirtz in purchasing the Chicago Stadium and the Black Hawks. The elder Norris in turn surrendered his holdings in the Stadium and bought young Jim's interest in the Wings. No direct link between Norris and other NHL teams was ever proved, but the player deals between Detroit and Chicago had the look of a family compact. Jack Adams insisted that the interest of Pops Norris in hockey was purely altruistic. "Why, I saw Pops once give $40,000 to the New York Rangers, no questions asked, just to help keep them from folding."

Detroit won the Cup for the last time in 1954–55, just before Montreal Canadiens set off on a despotic span of five in a row. Bruce Norris, a tall, fair-haired man, had returned to run the Wings and he decided, after the Wings sagged to fifth in 1961–62, on rearranging the front office.

Adams, in Norris's view, had to go. There was a groping for sugar to coat the firing, lame excuses that Adams ought to have a little more time to himself, a little more leisure to spend with his wife, Helen. Jack brushed aside all speculation when asked about his departure. "I was," he said bluntly, "kicked out."

The Wings' athletic fortunes did improve immediately after Adams long association with them ended. Under Abel, they qualified for the Cup final in 1962–63 and 1963–64, losing each time to Toronto. They were in the final again in 1965–66, beaten in six games by Montreal.

Adams spent the last three years of his life presiding over the Central Pros, back in hockey but never quite getting over his firing by the Wings. Three years ago, in New York, he received the Lester Patrick Trophy as the man who had done the most for hockey in the United States. Howe, his Guy was there, and Howe had the grace to acknowledge Adams's paternal attitude. He turned toward Jack in a banquet room at Toot Shor's and said, "Close to my father, up very close, it's you."

Adams got up to speak at the end, caught up in the melancholy thought of ongoing time. "May God take all of you in His arms," he said, "but not too soon."

Under Abel the Red Wings floundered in recent years. They finished sixth in 1967–68 and fifth in 1968–69.

A brief revival occurred in 1969–70 when the Detroit sextet finished third in the NHL's East Division. Bolstered by defenseman Carl Brewer and high-scoring Frank Mahovlich, the Red Wings appeared to be a playoff threat until they were shellacked by Chicago in four straight games in April 1970. Then a succession of setbacks crippled the team.

Brewer walked out on the team in mid-summer soon after Ned Harkness, the former Cornell University coach, was named the Red Wings mentor. Harkness immediately made his presence felt with a series of edicts which annoyed several veterans. By the start of the season the Detroiters were riddled with dissension with Harkness at the center of the controversy.

Eventually, Harkness was removed as coach but, surprisingly, installed as general manager. His bench replacement was ex-Red Wing defenseman Doug Barkley. As manager, Harkness cleaned house, trading Mahovlich to Montreal, Peter Stemkowski and Bruce MacGregor to New York, while negotiating several other deals. By the end of the 1970–71 campaign in which they missed the playoffs, the Red Wings boasted of a young and seemingly eager team and Harkness appeared to have wiped most of the troublemakers out of his lineup. Through it all, Gordie Howe remained and vowed to play through the 1971–72 season. A chronic case of arthritis, however, dimmed his chances; and when the Wings lined up for the first faceoff in the fall of 1971, "number 9" was missing from the line-up, retired to a vice-presidential post in the organization.

Without him, The Wings rose from seventh to fifth, four points behind Toronto the last Eastern playoff qualifier. Barkley, after a weak start, was replaced by former Red Wing forward, iron man Johnny Wilson, who rallied the team to the near miss.

In 1972–73 the Wings again missed but only by two points, this time to Buffalo. Even though they had gone over the .500 mark and earned 10 more points in the standings over 1971–72, it was still as good as a mile. Wilson was then dismissed in favor of Port Huron's tempestuous, towel-tossing Ted Garvin, who had been named to the International League's first all star team as coach.

Garvin's nucleus consists of 52-goal scorer Mickey Redmond,

40-goal man Marcel Dionne, promising speedster Henry Boucha and a Ken Dryden-type goaltender up from the Virginia Red Wings, American Hockey League rookie-of-the-year Doug Grant.

Montreal Canadiens

MONTREAL CANADIENS had won the Stanley Cup on the late afternoon of May 11, 1968, for the fifteenth time. Inside their cluttered dressing quarters, in the old Montreal Forum, victory champagne was being poured from long, green bottles down long, dry throats. Then Hector (Toe) Blake, the thick-set, perspiring coach, 55 years old, made a simple announcement: "I think this is it. I think I'm quitting. This was the longest season, and one of the hardest, with my fightingest team."

It occurred to Blake that he was abandoning the best back-of-the-bench job in hockey. "I'd like to coach Canadiens for a hundred years, but," heavily, wearily, "the tension is too terrific. On the days of some games, this year, I was almost not human."

Blake did retire to the prosperous tranquility of his Montreal tavern, retained by Canadiens in the relaxed capacity as assistant to Sam Pollock, the club's cunning general manager. Pollock was succeeded by the squat Claude Ruel, who was 29 when he accepted the job, the youngest coach in the National League.

Casual fans would think Blake's unparalleled success might ease his stubborn, gnawing urge to win. No man, on the sod or under it, matched his distinguished stewardship in the NHL: nine first-place finishes in 13 years, eight Stanley Cup triumphs, five in succession in an all-conquering span between 1955 and 1960.

But today, winning today, was the spur that continually raked Blake's psyche. His dressing-room oratory was loud, sometimes pro-

fane, often with whipcracks in it. "Get mad!" he would advise his subordinates, unquietly, when they were losing. "You're better than they are! Look up! Up!"

If a player looks high enough in the Montreal boudoir, he can see eight Canadiens of medieval generations staring back at him. Georges Vezina is in the gallery, and Howie Morenz, Joe Malone and Aurel Joliat, Sylvio Mantha, Herb Gardiner, Newsy Lalonde and Rocket Richard. Every one of them is in the Hall of Fame.

Underneath the unsmiling portraits, in red block letters, is an inspirational line written in combat during World War I by the Canadian poet, John McCrae: "To you from failing hands we throw the torch, Be yours to hold it high . . ." Dick Duff, an irreverent Montreal left wing, once said, "Nobody grabbed McCrae's message quite like Blake. He always let us know that if we didn't catch the torch, he'd light it under us."

In the early years of Blake's command, in the seasons immediately after he replaced the late Dick Irvin in 1955, the Canadiens required no inspirational literature. They formed a swift, dominant crowd that reeled off five consecutive Cup conquests, the Canadiens of Rocket Richard and Bernard Geoffrion and Bert Olmstead, of Doug Harvey and Tom Johnson and Jacques Plante and Tom Johnson and Dickie Moore and the big, young Jean Beliveau.

It was customary for Blake's detractors to sneer, "Even a sports writer could win coaching that mob. All you gotta do is open and shut the gate." That mob reckoned that any best-of-seven-game series was a four-game set. If it took them any longer to win, it was a mistake. If they didn't win at all, it was a scandal.

Athletic dynasties end when the legs collapse, or the farms stop producing; but Blake, rebuilding with unknowns supplied first by Frank Selke, then by Sam Pollock, won the Cup three times in his last four years. When he retired, only three players—Henri Richard, Claude Provost and the big, eldering Beliveau—remained from his first Montreal team in 1955–56.

In his last season, Blake was forced to integrate five rookies into the line-up when his veterans were injured. He guided them, cussing and goading, from last place at Christmas to the Stanley Cup by Mother's Day. Before he quit, he had erased all the raps against him as a pushbutton coach.

Observers were inclined to forget, as they marveled at Blake's abrasive crotchets and coaching genius, that he was called the Old

Lamplighter when he was the left-wing confederate of Rocket Richard and Elmer Lach. He lit a red lamp 260 times behind enemy goalkeepers.

Blake's playing career was distinguished, more or less, by courtly conduct. In one season, 1945–46, he won the Lady Byng Trophy as the athlete best combining exemplary manners with impressive play. In later years, as Canadiens' curator, Blake took special pains to prove that his winning the Byng was an extreme form reversal. He was in constant rebellion against what he considered the oppressive heel of authority.

Eight years ago, as one notorious example, he became agitated by the decisions of referee Dalton McArthur of Maple, Ontario. He skidded across the ice in Chicago after losing a playoff game and directed a right-hand wallop at McArthur's startled expression. Enchanted witnesses claim it was the best blow thrown in the Chicago Stadium since Tony Zale was punching the face off Rocky Graziano 20 years ago in their wild middleweight quarrels. Vice was its own reward in the McArthur case. Blake was fined $2,000 by NHL president Clarence Campbell for his intemperance, the largest single rebuke ever assessed in hockey history.

The penalty did not noticeably deter Blake, however, from unloosing his temper whenever he felt abused. Two fans accused him and the scarred Claude Provost of assault after a noisy night of bloodletting in the Los Angeles Sports Arena on November 19, 1967. They were fitted for an impressive lawsuit of $655,000. Bernard Weisman, of Northridge, California, testified that he was booing Blake and the Canadiens, and that he moved close to the Montreal bench to administer close-range needling. Somehow, he said, he came away with a gash on his scalp requiring 23 stitches to shut after being struck by a stick wielded by Provost or Blake. Weisman demanded, as balm, $405,000. A Los Angeles woman, the second plaintiff, claimed she suffered a concussion after being hit by a stick in the same incident. She suggested, by writ, that $250,000 would be adequate to repair the damage. Blake and Provost were acquitted of malicious assault in July, 1968.

Blake's departure from the Canadiens did not mean the team would be bereft of his spiritual encouragement. There was talk, during extensive renovations to the Forum in the summer of 1968, of hanging his portrait in the dressing room with Richard and the rest. It would be a blunt reminder about that business with the torch.

The Canadiens were organized on December 10, 1909, eight years

before the conception of the NHL, and have always been the personification of Gallic flamboyance, of French elan and speed. But in the last 20 years the team has been a harmonious amalgam of French- and English-speaking players, split between the Richards, Provost, Beliveau, Rousseau, Bouchard, Plante and Cournoyer, for instance, and the Harveys, Reardon, Moore, Duff, Lach, Olmstead, Harris, Backstrom, Worsley and Blake. They are a muscular microcosm of Canada's bicultural and bilingual community, representative of 4,000,000 French-Canadians and those among the 17,000,000 other Canadians who are not fans of the Toronto Maple Leafs.

The English-speaking Canadiens kid their French-speaking playmates as "Pepzees" or "Gorfs." Pepzee is a quaint term peculiar to the Montreal patois ever since a soft-drink strike depleted supplies of Coca-Cola. "We 'ave no Coke," the Montreal storekeepers would apologize, "but we 'ave Pepzee."

"Gorf" of course is "frog" spelled backwards, and the English-speaking Canadiens like the uncomplicated goaler Lorne (Gump) Worsley make of that what they will. Lumpy Gump, who is built like a badly packed army dufflebag, was the punchline for a joke told by the jovial Provost during the team's visit to Expo 67 two years ago. Provost conducted a question-and-answer session for his companions, based on the vigilant security precautions taken to protect Charles DeGaulle. The reedy old mossback who generally managed France had offended many Canadians by calling for Quebec's secession from the rest of the country.

"Who guard the President of the United States?" Provost asked. And answered himself, "The Secret Service."

"Who guard the Prime Minister of Canada?" Provost demanded.

"The Royal Canadian Mounted Police," he replied.

Then, in his thickest Pepzee accent, "Now, *mes frères*, who guard De Gaulle?"

"Gump Worzlee!" he shouted.

The Flying Frenchmen, which became the Canadiens' flashy sobriquet, were not started by French sportsmen. They were inspired one December night in 1909 by a Scottish baker and a pugnacious Irish contractor. The Eastern Canada Hockey Association was the only pro league in existence, and it was sagging.

James Strachan, whose family was big in the baking industry, managed the Montreal Wanderers. One winter night in 1909 he was in earnest conversation with Ambrose O'Brien of Renfrew, Ontario, heir to railroad riches surrounded by his father. "There's 70 per cent

of Montreal's population that's French," Strachan told O'Brien. "A club of French-Canadian players would be a successful attraction in this town."

O'Brien momentarily deflected the notion. He instead sought admission for his home team, the Renfrew Millionaires, into the Eastern Canada league. He was refused and, typically bull-headed, formed his own league.

O'Brien had his own team, the Millionaires. He founded the Montreal Canadiens and backed them with $5,000 to guarantee the players' salaries. He coaxed James Strachan to transfer the Montreal Wanderers to the new league, and financed two more teams, Cobalt and Haileybury, from Ontario's thriving nickel belt. He called the league the National Hockey Association, which became the immediate predecessor of the NHL. O'Brien's audacity destroyed the floundering Eastern League, which collapsed when Ottawa Senators and Montreal Shamrocks withdrew to join him.

Canadiens played their first game on January 5, 1910, against Cobalt, in a cramped sardine can called the Jubilee Rink. They attracted 3,000 noisy partisans to watch seven-man hockey played in two 30-minute periods.

Their first captain and manager, Jean Baptiste (Jack) Laviolette, was perfectly cast for a French-Canadian clientele. He was swift, and his uncommonly long black mane streamed behind him as he burst down the ice to provide shots on goal for Edouard (Newsy) Lalonde and Didier (Pit) Lepine. Joe Cattarinich, who would later join Leo Dandurand as co-owner of the club, played goal. Cattarinich yielded six goals to Cobalt, but his teammates responded with seven.

Canadiens won only one other game in the 12 played during their first season, but O'Brien made a 50 per cent profit. He sold the team to a Montreal wrestler who called himself George Kennedy. He called himself Kennedy because his father, whose surname was Kendall, refused to have a wrestler in the family.

Kennedy played the good-guy role outside the ring, as Newsy Lalonde would remember years after. "Kennedy led us to our first Stanley Cup in 1916," Lalonde recalled last summer, when he was 82, "without once raising his voice or swearing."

Three years later, in the spring of 1919, the Canadiens played in the only Stanley Cup final ever canceled. They were on the Pacific Coast, combating the Seattle Metropolitans, when the area was

caught in the massive epidemic of influenza that followed World War I.

Several of the Canadiens were felled by flu, including Bad Joe Hall, a smooth vigorous center who had been born in England. Lalonde roomed with Hall and urged the Englishman to stay in bed. Hall refused, persisting in wearing his Canadiens' sweater until he died of pneumonia on April 6, 1919. Hall's death prompted officials to cancel the championship with the series locked at two wins each and a tie.

Hall was 38 when he died, a 15-year veteran who was called Bad Joe because of his implacable, muscles-first approach. Lalonde, often called the meanest man in hockey history, testifies: "Hall was the meanest."

Kennedy died in 1921, never fully recovered from the flu, and Canadiens were sold to Louis Letourneau, Joe Cattarinich and Leo Dandurand, then operating a race track in Cleveland. Their agent, Canadien coach Cecil Hart, bought a bargain for $11,000. Dandurand peddled the team in 1935, in the tatters of the Depression, to the Canadian Arena Company for $165,000. The company, backed by the respected Senator Donat Raymond, retained the team for 22 years before selling to the Molson brewing family for more than $1,000,000.

The successive Montreal managements have catered to the hero-hungry French-Canadian minority, occasionally to the point of harmless deceit. One year the operators attempted to pass off one Claude Hennessy Burke, an Irishman from New Brunswick, as Claude Bourque. But such capers were seldom necessary, for there was a steady flow of bona fide Frenchmen—Aurel Joliat, Albert (Battleship) Leduc, George Boucher, Billy Boucher, Sylvio Mantha, Wildor Larochelle, Johnny Gagnon and Armand Mondou.

Their early hero, however, bore a lively Gallic-sounding label but, ironically, Howie Morenz was from German-Swiss stock. A cartoon in a Montreal newspaper put Morenz in gaudy perspective, *"Morenz est synonyme de la vitesse."* The quintessence, in sluggish English, of excitement.

The goaler of the early time, from 1911 until 1926, was the tall sober Georges Vezina, who kept his cool so carefully that he was endorsed as the Chicoutimi Cucumber. Goalkeepers still compete for the trophy awarded in tribute to him. He collapsed in action (ah, there, Joe Hall) and died, on March 27, 1926, a victim of tuberculosis.

Canadiens sank through the thirties, no special power after Morenz died in 1937—until Rocket Richard arrived in the early forties. They took the Stanley Cup in 1943–44 and 1945–46, under the late Dick Irvin's jurisdiction, but Canadiens' commanding dominance began two years later. They have won the Cup 12 times since Frank Selke was given the robes of authority on July 25, 1946.

Selke was a small electrician from Kitchener, Ontario, who apprenticed in hockey's front-office affairs under disputatious Conn Smythe in Toronto. He quit the Maple Leafs after Smythe returned, quarrelsome and prickly, from World War II.

Selke didn't resemble an empire maker, short, trim, looking like a business agent for the embalmer's union; but few empire makers have looked the part. His first look at Montreal's empire, Stanley Cup champions and all, did not inspire optimism. "I told Senator Raymond that no other team could match his top six players—Bill Durnan in goal, Ken Reardon and Butch Bouchard on defense, and the Punch Line of Blake, Richard and Elmer Lach. But there were no reserves, no farm system."

Senator Raymond requested Selke's solution, and got it. "We must build a chain of farms in every Canadian province, like Toronto has. It will take money." Senator Raymond gave Selke carte blanche. Money was invested in young players and new teams across the country. One winter Selke spent $300,000 to keep Montreal's farm affiliates solvent. Another year, anxious to turn Jean Beliveau professional, he bought the entire Quebec Senior Amateur League.

Selke was retired by the Molsons in 1964, a reward he didn't necessarily appreciate. He was replaced by the shrewd, agile Sam Pollock, whom he had groomed and who kept Canadiens on top through the coaching era of Blake.

Nor was there any sign of decline in the first year of Claude Ruel's stewardship. The Canadiens subdued, in succession, New York Rangers, Boston Bruins and St. Louis Blues in the all-conquering sweep to their fifteenth Stanley Cup.

However, dissension set in during the 1969–70 campaign, during which the Canadiens finished out of the playoffs on the final night of the season. Ruel remained the coach at the beginning of the 1970–71 season but soon was replaced by his assistant, Al MacNeil. Suddenly, the Montrealers rallied and finished a respectable third in the East Division. They were regarded as heavy underdogs against Boston in the opening playoff round but whipped the Bruins in seven games; bested the North Stars in six; and went on to win the

Stanley Cup from Chicago in another thrilling, seven-game struggle with rookie goaltender Ken Dryden playing all 20 games after only six regular season games as his NHL experience.

MacNeil, although a winner, had ruffled the feathers of Henri Richard during the final series. The captain publicly denounced his coach when he failed to get a full turn, but scored the winning goal of the series. After the season MacNeil returned to the Nova Scotia Voyageurs and St. Louis mentor Scotty Bowman, Anglo but bilingual, came back to his old organization to replace him.

Under Bowman the Canadiens were third again but were pushed out in the quarterfinal of the playoffs by the Rangers. A year later they had again ascended to the top of the East Division and, in disposing of Buffalo, Philadelphia and Chicago, drank champagne from the Stanley Cup for the eighteenth time since World War I.

Richard, apparently not ready to retire at 37, skated like a junior; passed Red Kelly as the player to have participated in the most playoff games; and had his name inscribed on the Cup for the eleventh time, another record. Even with Richard's retirement there is still Yvan Cournoyer, Jacques Lemaire, Guy Lafleur, Frank and Peter Mahovlich, Jacques Laperriere, Serge Savard, and Guy Lapointe. Formidable!

With the Boston "dynasty" shattered it seemed likely that the Canadiens, with an abundance of talent centered on the parent club, bolstered by the Voyageur farm team and heavily endowed by the clever manipulations of Pollock in stockpiling junior draft choices, should be in the throne room for some time to come.

New York Rangers

THE NEW YORK RANGERS unquestionably never would have been born were it not for the immediate success of their predecessors in Manhattan, the New York Americans. The fact has been overlooked by many contemporaries, but it was the Americans who introduced big-league hockey to New York. That the national game of Canada would make a hit in Gotham seemed axiomatic to those associated with hockey. Amateur teams had been playing it for years in rinks around the metropolitan area since the turn of the twentieth century. To succeed on a big-time level, hockey needed a push, and that push—which eventually developed into a shove—was provided by a Canadian-born hockey writer, William "Bill" MacBeth.

A warm, persuasive type, MacBeth was on good terms with practically everybody. One of his acquaintances was William "Big Bill" Dwyer, a bootlegger who had parlayed his liquor investment into a multimillion-dollar operation. Meanwhile, George Lewis "Tex" Rickard, who was born in Kansas City and raised in Texas, who had made a small fortune promoting fights, came to New York, where he immediately became a promotional genius. When, in 1924, the New York Life Insurance Company announced it was foreclosing the mortgage on the old Madison Square Garden and would, in its place, erect a 40-story office building, Rickard decided he would promote a new Garden.

With the assistance of a syndicate of businessmen—Rickard called them "my 600 millionaires"—he organized the new Madison Square

Garden Corporation. Construction began on January 9, 1925, and from that day on Rickard began wondering just what events he'd need to attract people to the huge new arena. He realized that boxing, his favorite sport, would not be enough, and he sought advice from colleagues about promoting other attractions. One such adviser was Col. John S. Hammond, former military attaché in Argentina whom he had met during his cattle ventures.

Just to be sure about hockey's possibilities, Colonel Hammond visited the old Mount Royal Arena in Montreal for a look at top-grade hockey. That was all he needed. Convinced that hockey would be a winner in New York he returned to the United States and tried to persuade Rickard that he should obtain a National Hockey League franchise. But Rickard, a Midwesterner ignorant of the "Canadian Game," was unimpressed with Colonel Hammond's reports. This naturally perturbed Colonel Hammond, who realized that the NHL had two franchises available for the buying.

One of them was the Hamilton (Ontario) Tigers. While Rickard fiddled, Big Bill Dwyer, on MacBeth's advice, moved in and purchased the Tigers for $75,000. Knowing that Rickard was cool to hockey, Dwyer wasn't concerned when the Garden charged him a steep rental fee for the new team, which he dubbed the Americans. Bill was nonplussed because he had money and a "guarantee" from the Garden that his Americans would be the only hockey team in town. Dwyer might have guessed that the Garden would renege on its promise immediately after his Americans played their opening game in New York on December 15, 1925, against the Montreal Canadiens.

Pomp and circumstance dominated the evening. The Governor-General's band of Canada, the West Point band and the cream of society attended the event that won the hearts of the spectators. Two goals by Billy Boucher helped Montreal to a 3–1 victory over the Americans, but the fans were more intrigued by the speedy game, the collisions and the general excitement. It was obvious that NHL hockey was to stay in New York.

This bothered Rickard. Although he was renting the Garden to the Americans, he suddenly decided he also would like to have a second New York club playing out his arena, one that would be wholly owned by the Garden. Colonel Hammond already had suspected Rickard would be wooed by hockey's popularity and had gone about the business of laying the groundwork for a new team. The colonel had heard about a bright young Canadian named Conn

Smythe, who was successfully managing teams in Toronto. He invited Smythe to come to New York and organize the Rangers.

Smythe, like Dwyer, found the Garden brass less than appealing, and a month after he was hired, he quit, returned to Canada and became the power behind the Toronto Maple Leafs. Smythe was replaced by Lester Patrick who, along with his brother, Frank, had established a reputation as a hockey promoter and innovator in Western Canada after an immensely successful career as a player. The new team, which already had been tagged Tex's Rangers, was to be managed and coached by Patrick. Lester, who was called the Silver Fox, because of his obtrusive white mane, forged an awesome hockey machine led by Frank Boucher, a former member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Bill and Bun Cook.

Dwyer, quite naturally, was furious when he learned of Rickard's plans for a second hockey team in New York. Big Bill wasn't concerned about the new competition but he was annoyed that the Garden reneged on its promise. Dwyer's wrath was the first act of hostility for what was to prove to be an extraordinarily keen rivalry between the Rangers and Americans, one that matched in intensity the bitterness between the city's New York Giants and Brooklyn Dodgers in baseball. From the financial viewpoint there was no competition. Since the Garden owned the Rangers, Colonel Hammond's boys got in rent-free whereas the Americans' rent bill grew steeper and steeper.

Garden officials have preferred to overlook the history of the Rangers' intrusion on the Americans' existence. Both teams attracted great crowds in their early years and left little doubt that New Yorkers would support two hockey teams. But the Garden in its greediness made it more and more difficult for the Americans to exist and the club went out of business in 1942 but not until it played an important part in the success of the Rangers and hockey in Manhattan and even changed its name to Brooklyn Americans for a year. The Rangers benefitted indirectly because of the Americans' image of rambunctiousness. Dwyer's club had an air of illegitimacy while the Rangers seemed to carry themselves with dignity and their president, Colonel Hammond, liked to boast about it. The Americans, obviously, couldn't make such claims.

There was the time the Americans were training at New Haven, Connecticut, in 1928. Their quarters were in the Garde Hotel, a hostel that the Americans' manager, Thomas Patrick (Tommy) Gorman, nearly saw destroyed before his eyes. "One night," Gorman

later recalled, "Lionel Conacher was playing cards in a room with Billy Burch and others. All of a sudden Red Green threw an apple core and hit Conacher in the eye. Lionel leaped from his chair and chased Red down a hall. Green slammed a door behind him at the end of the hall only to have big Conacher draw back and make a shoulder lunge at the closed door. Conny missed the door but he crashed into the wall so hard that some of the back section of the building actually collapsed—with Conacher and Green beneath it. It cost the hockey club $500."

The Garden management let no opportunity pass to harass the Americans. Once, during the 1928–29 season, Colonel Hammond summoned Gorman to his office to complain about the Americans' deportment. He berated Gorman and insisted that at that very moment his players were cavorting in a big party at a flat on Fifty-first Street around the corner from Madison Square Garden. Gorman dashed from the office, got the assistance of two detectives and found the party. When they burst into the party they discovered not one of the Americans but nearly a dozen Rangers—celebrating the birthday of their defenseman, Ching Johnson.

There was little Colonel Hammond could do about his Rangers' conduct. They were so impressive on ice, almost from their very start at the Garden, that reprimands hardly ever were ordered.

Unlike the Americans, the Rangers won their first game at the Garden, on November 17, 1926, against the Montreal Maroons. New York won the game, 1–0, on Bill Cook's goal at 18:37 of the second period. Seabury Lawrence, who covered the game for the *New York Times*, observed: "On their first appearance the Rangers made a distinctly favorable impression. Bunny and Bill Cook, playing the wings, and Boucher at center, distinguished themselves by particularly skillful stick work and clever skating."

Boucher, who in time would become coach and then manager of the Rangers, selected the 1927–28 version of the team—then, only two years old—as one of the two finest Ranger teams. "The 1927–28 squad," said Boucher, "won New York's first Stanley Cup. It had two very strong lines, a remarkably effective defense and good goalkeeping."

To win the Stanley Cup, the Rangers eliminated Pittsburgh and Boston in the semifinals to advance against the Montreal Maroons in the finals. "It was tremendously difficult for a Ranger team in those days," Boucher observed. "We couldn't play the finals on our

home ice in New York because the arena was booked with another attraction; we had to play every game at the Montreal Forum."

The Maroons were bolstered by such stars as Nels Stewart, Babe Siebert, and Hooley Smith. They defeated the Rangers, 2–0, in the opening game. When New York's goalie Lorne Chabot was injured in the second game, the Rangers asked Montreal manager Eddie Gerard for permission to borrow either Alex Connell, a competent goalie for Ottawa, or minor leaguer Hughie McCormick. Both goalies were in the stands and would have been adequate replacements for the injured Chabot but Gerard refused to permit such substitution. The Rangers were perplexed. They had no substitute goaltender and no forward or defenseman who felt competent enough to wear the pads. Finally, Lester Patrick, the 45-year-old manager who had never played goal in his life, volunteered.

Inspired by their Silver Fox, the Rangers contained the Maroons until early in the third period when Bill Cook scored to put New York ahead, 1–0. Montreal at last beat Patrick at 14:20 of the third period forcing the game into overtime when Frank Boucher scored to win the game for the Rangers. But Montreal defeated New York, 2–0, in the third game and needed but one win for the Cup. Again, Boucher was the hero scoring the only goal of the game, forcing a fifth and final contest on Montreal ice. Naturally, the Maroons were favored. They had won the Cup two seasons earlier and a goal in the fifth game loaned suspicion that they would win it again, especially when the Rangers were penalized early in the match.

By this time Lester Patrick had replaced the injured Lorne Chabot with an obscure goalie named Joe Miller, who achieved little distinction in the NHL. To many, the mere mention of his name was a joke and not necessarily because of the joke book. "He'd been named Red Light Miller," Boucher remembered, "because he had played for the New York Americans. They had a losing team then so, naturally, Joe was a losing goalkeeper. Frankly, I never thought he was bad and, as things turned out, he was just magnificent in the last game."

Shorthanded because of a penalty, the Rangers nevertheless controlled the puck, thanks to Boucher's expert stickhandling. The one-time Mounted Policeman even managed to launch an attack and was being guarded by Mervyn (Red) Dutton. "I knew his weakness," Boucher said. "If you pushed the puck through his legs, instead of watching you he'd look down at the puck. I tried the

trick and, sure enough, he looked down. By the time he looked up I was around him. I picked up the puck, skated in on Clint Benedict, Montreal's goalie, and flipped it into the right hand corner."

The Rangers still weren't out of danger. They were penalized again and once more Boucher was dispatched to the front. This time he controlled the puck at center ice. "I played it off the boards," he said, "hoping to pick up my own rebound and keep it in our possession." But he shot it too far ahead; so far, in fact, that Montreal defenseman Dunc Munro raced for the puck that was sitting almost midway between the two opponents.

"I was watching him," said Boucher. "He skated for it. Then, I could almost hear him think, 'By God, I can't get there in time.' He seemed to stop in one motion and then he changed his mind and went for the puck. By this time I was there. I just swooped over to one side, let him go by and then I had the whole ice to myself." Boucher placed the puck in exactly the same spot as he had earlier in the game. The final score was 2–1. The Rangers had won their first Stanley Cup.

The Rangers didn't win the Stanley Cup again until 1932–33 although they had powerful teams. In 1932 Conn Smythe's Maple Leafs routed New York, 6–4, 6–2, 6–4, marking the first time that a team had won a Stanley Cup final in three straight games. The Leafs trailed only once in the entire series, in the second game when Bun Cook and Doug Brennan gave the Rangers a 2–0 lead after one minute of the second period. Toronto then scored six consecutive goals to humiliate Patrick's team.

A year later the Rangers were the toast of hockey. Once again the Cook Brothers and Boucher reaffirmed their superiority. The players whom Smythe originally had signed when he was asked to organize the Rangers dominated play as the New Yorkers won the best of five series in four games. Bill Cook scored the decisive goal in the fourth and final game to give the Rangers a 1–0 victory. Two Toronto players, Alex Levinsky and Bill Thoms, were in the penalty box when the 35-year-old Cook scored. In addition to the Cook Brothers and Boucher, another ace for the Rangers was Cecil Dillon who scored eight goals and two assists. Three of the goals were scored against Toronto. Although Dillon never received the press that some of his more illustrious colleagues did, he was regarded by Patrick as the greatest he had ever seen.

A canny boss, Patrick realized that some of the cornerstones of the early Ranger teams were crumbling and had to be replaced. He

organized a farm system and during the mid and late thirties, fresh players began graduating from teams in Philadelphia, New York (Crescents) and various points in Canada. The Cooks eventually gave way to the likes of Bryan Hextall, Phil Watson, Alex Shibicky and two sons of Patrick, Lynn and Murray (Muzz).

The Americans were having less success. They never won the Stanley Cup and began to suffer at the gate. Their rent kept rising and Big Bill Dwyer soon was arrested and sent to the penitentiary for bootlegging. When he was released he had little of his original fortune and was in no position to back the Americans anymore. It was then that Red Dutton, who had plenty of NHL experience as a player, stepped in to save the Americans and prevent the Garden from applying the boot. Dutton desperately tried to keep the Americans afloat. He was the team's manager and chief cheerleader and became its number one character. Once, the Americans were playing in Detroit and Charlie (Rabbit) McVeigh was the linesman. Dutton and McVeigh had been old pals since childhood. They had fought together in World War I and played together in the early days of the Americans. It was Red who recalled that McVeigh was deaf but nonetheless recommended him as an NHL linesman although he knew Rabbit also was getting a pension from the Canadian government for his war disability.

In this game Dutton manifested no sympathy for McVeigh. Too many of the linesman's calls were going against the Americans. Dutton ranted and raved and tried to get McVeigh's attention whenever play stopped near the Americans' bench but McVeigh ignored him. When the game ended, Dutton rushed over to McVeigh and startled his old pal with a big "hello." Dutton inquired about his health and told McVeigh he had a friend in the government who could get him a pension increase. McVeigh was touched by the apparent sensitivity under fire.

"Aw, Red," he said, "that would be great. But what would you tell the Pension Board about my case?"

Suddenly, Dutton's voice rose several decibel counts. "I'll tell them," shouted Dutton, "you're blind, you little squirt."

Had the Americans been able to stay competitive with the Rangers in the late thirties they might have had a chance to survive but the Rangers had developed a new dynasty with their young players and, in 1939–40, were the most feared club in hockey. Boucher had retired to become coach and Patrick was the manager. Despite his fears that his sons would embarrass him, Patrick was gratified that

both Lynn and Muzz had developed into competent players, Lynn as a forward and Muzz as a defenseman. With the likeable Boucher behind the bench, the youngsters exhibited excitement and class.

"I'd encourage suggestions," said Boucher. "The boys would come up with them and then we'd practice the new ideas. One of them was the box defense whereby the four players killing a penalty arrange themselves in a box formation in front of a goaltender. A more sensational one was an offensive penalty-killing combination. Instead of playing a tight defensive game, the Rangers were thirsty for goals, even when they were shorthanded due to a penalty.

"When we were a man short," Boucher explained, "we'd send out three forwards and one defenseman and we'd forecheck in their own end. This team was so good it would score more goals over a season than it would have goals scored upon it during the penalty-killing."

On November 23, 1939, the Rangers played a 1–1 tie with the Canadiens. From that point on they won 14 games and tied five for a 19-game unbeaten streak, a club record. Boucher believed it easily could have been extended to 25; but it didn't because the Rangers were too smart for their own good. "We were playing in Chicago in the twentieth game of the streak," said Boucher, "and we were playing rings around them. It was the kind of game we should have won hands down but, for some strange reason, we couldn't score a goal and were down, 1–0, going into the third period."

During the intermission Boucher convened his men and came up with another revolutionary idea. If the Rangers hadn't tied the score —they were convinced Chicago wouldn't score another goal—by the final minutes New York would pull goalkeeper Davey Kerr, but not in the usual way. Normally, a team would wait for a whistle and a face-off before replacing the goaltender with a sixth skater. This, of course, enables the opposition to prepare for the extra man. "We decided," added Boucher, "that it would be better to put in the goalie without making it obvious—to do it on the fly. And that was the plan."

Chances are the strategy would have worked except that Boucher neglected to inform Lester Patrick of the plan. Normally this wouldn't have mattered since Lester didn't occupy the bench. But this night in Chicago he rejoined the players on the bench. Lester was distrustful of the Chicago timekeeper, so when the clock turned to within minutes of the end he got off the bench and sat next to the

timekeeper who was located between the Black Hawks' and Rangers' benches.

"By this time," said Boucher, "we had the puck in their end. The signal was given for Kerr to come off the ice and the extra forward to go on. And that's exactly what happened. Except that Lester only noticed the extra forward and didn't realize that Kerr had been removed."

Believing that Boucher had made the mistake of allowing too many men on the ice, the frantic Lester beseeched Boucher to remove the sixth skater before the referee saw him. "Paul Thompson, the Black Hawk coach, heard him," said Boucher. "And when he saw six men in his zone he started screaming. We were about to put the puck in the net when the referee blew his whistle to give us a penalty. Then he turned around and saw Kerr out of the nets and realized there shouldn't have been a penalty at all. But it was too late. Some adroit strategy backfired, and Chicago won the game, 1–0."

Boucher's mighty Rangers won their next five games in a row for an overall record of 24 victories or ties in 25 games. They defeated Boston, four games to two in the Stanley Cup semifinal round and faced Toronto in the finals. Three of the games—including the final two—went into sudden-death overtime and in each of the contests the Rangers scored the winner. With the series tied 2–2, the last three games were scheduled for Maple Leaf Gardens' ice because Madison Square Garden was unavailable. The Rangers won the fifth game, 2–1, at 11:43 of the first overtime and won the sixth game at 2:07 of the first overtime and the Stanley Cup. The Rangers were paced by Phil Watson, Bryan Hextall, Dutch Hiller, the Patrick Brothers, Alex Shibicky and the Colville Brothers, Mac and Neil. Only two players on the Cup-winning team—Dave Kerr and Art Coulter—had not come up through the Ranger farm system. It appeared that the Ranger dynasty might last another decade. But World War II put an end to that. Muzz Patrick was the first to enlist and, in time, the Rangers were to lose more good players to the armed forces than any other team.

The war years were disastrous to hockey in New York. The Americans, confronted by high rentals on the one hand and the loss of top players to the armed forces on the other, capitulated in 1942. The Rangers continued but they hardly were a representative hockey club. They finished sixth for four straight seasons and set all kinds of records for ineptitude. They went 25 games without winning

between January 23, 1944 and November 11, 1944 (21 losses and four ties) and on January 23, 1944 were defeated, 15–0, by the Detroit Red Wings. They were so bad that even Boucher came out of retirement to play a few games for them and was better than many of his regulars.

If there was any solace for the Rangers in the war years it was in Boucher's sense of humor and the laughs supplied by many of the characters who peopled the Garden from 1942 through 1950 when the Rangers again reached the Stanley Cup finals. One of the comic characters was Phil Watson, who, despite his name, was part-French-Canadian and whose English was often twisted and well-salted with French expressions. Watson was a turbulent center who played superbly with Hextall and Lynn Patrick. He was the architect of many a key goal and played the game with great intensity. Often, his temper would get the best of him and he'd become involved in assorted brawls, most of which he lost. But it never prevented Watson from trying again.

Once, he clashed with Bingo Kampman, a Toronto defenseman of monumental strength. Kampman lifted Watson off the ice, twirled him around his head and then deposited the Ranger over the boards into a box seat. Another time he was having trouble with Bucko McDonald, then an aging Maple Leaf. After a lengthy debate, Watson finally came up with what he thought was the perfect squelch, except that he misplaced his words. "Bucko," Watson shouted, "you're nothing but a been-has!"

In the postwar years the Rangers were involved in another stunt, one that might have shaken the world of psychology, had it worked. The Blueshirts were in a losing trough at the time and needed help. Someone mentioned that a certain Dr. Tracy had successfully implanted athletes with a positive psyche.

The psychologist accepted the invitation to try his powers of persuasion on the skaters. The burly doctor entered the dressing room prior to a game with Boston. He was particularly attentive to Tony Leswick and appeared to have mesmerized Tony while Pentti Lund, Alex Kaleta and Buddy O'Connor looked on with a mixture of amusement and amazement.

Amazement was the reaction of the Garden fans as the Rangers held Boston to a 3–3 tie going into the final minutes of play. But the Bruins' Bill Quackenbush broke the spell with a long shot that crazily hopped past goalie Chuck Rayner and the Rangers lost, 4–3.

That ended it for Dr. Tracy, but he didn't stop trying. He tried

persuading the Rangers that he realized his mistakes. "You've got to let me at the goolie," Dr. Tracy insisted. "He's not relaxed."

The Rangers have had players of every conceivable ethnic extraction, but how many recall the only Chinese player to wear the Blue? That would be Larry "King" Kwong, who graduated from the Rovers to the Rangers in the 1947–48 season.

Kwong was a speedy skater, but lacked size and scoring ability and eventually was relegated to the minors. But not after Gotham headline writers had a field day with his name. The most overused banner was: "There's Nothing Kwong with the Rangers That a Few Goals Won't Cure."

Slowly, the Rangers began to lift themselves to a plateau of respectability if not stardom. During the 1947–48 season they reached the Stanley Cup semifinal round but were quickly eliminated by the Detroit Red Wings. They made another bid for the Cup in the 1949–50 season. By this time Boucher had become manager of the team and Lynn Patrick the coach.

It was a good club, hardly great, but possessed a number of talents. Chuck (Prince Charlie) Rayner, who was with the last New York Americans team, was the Ranger goalie. There were stalwart forwards including Pentti Lund, Tony Leswick and Edgar Laprade and hefty defensemen such as Gus Kyle, Pat Egan, Jack Lancien and Allan Stanley.

The club grabbed the attention of the league when it upset Montreal's Canadiens—armed with Maurice Richard, Bill Durnan and Butch Bouchard—in the semifinal round, four games to one. When the Rangers defeated the Canadiens, 3–0, in the final game on Montreal ice, people began considering the New Yorkers a genuine dark-horse contender for the Stanley Cup. Coach Patrick was less diffident. He unabashedly declared:

"If the boys can keep the sharp edge, we're a cinch to take the Stanley Cup."

As much as they admired him, newsmen took Lynn and his prediction lightly. And for good reason. Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus already had camped in Madison Square Garden, compelling the Rangers to play all their "home" games on the road. That their opponents would be the awesome Detroit Red Wings offered even less comfort to the local strategists.

Right off the bat, the Rangers were nearly wiped off the ice. The Red Wings romped to a 4–1 win at Detroit's Olympia in the opening game. Patrick was furious. He blamed the loss on overconfi-

dence and made known that he had promoted his Lilliputian goalie from New Haven to the Ranger roster in case he was needed—that Emile Francis, who today needs no introduction.

The second and third games were held on neutral ice or, if you will, Ranger "home" ice—Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto. All tickets were sold 45 minutes after they went on sale, which says it all for Toronto as a hockey town. After the two games in Toronto, all other games would be played in Detroit.

Maple Leaf Gardens was not expected to be any special balm for the Blueshirts, but Red Wing coach Tommy Ivan sensed trouble. "It'll be tough for us," he said before the second game of the series. "I'm still scared of them. The series will go more than four games."

Ivan didn't realize how prophetic he was.

The Rangers whomped the Red Wings in the second game, 3–1, on Laprade's two goals and another by defenseman Pat Egan and now the finals were tied at one game apiece. What's more, the supposedly phlegmatic Toronto fans adopted the Rangers as their own and rooted for New York as passionately as they would have for the Leafs. But they had little to cheer about in the third game, played at the Gardens. Detroit blanked the Rangers, 4–0, and returned to Olympia expecting an early trip to Florida to celebrate their playoff win. The Wings had good cause for optimism; they led the series, two games to one and all the remaining games would be on Detroit ice.

"We'll win the next two games and wind this series up in a hurry," the Wings promised.

The promise began crumbling at the last second of the second period, with the Wings ahead, 2–0. Buddy O'Connor scored at 19:59 of the middle period making it 2–1 Detroit and although Detroit scored early in the third, the Rangers were carrying a hot hand. Laprade made it 3–2 at 8:09 and Kyle tied the game at 16:26, setting the stage for sudden-death overtime. Here's how Joe Nichols described the early overtime action in the *New York Times*:

"The Rangers tried to keep up their heavy rushes, but the Wings took over and thrice sent their star pointmaker, Ted Lindsay, in on Rayner. Two of his drives were easy enough, but the third seemed to have him beaten and only a miraculous save kept the disk out of the cage."

Then, the Rangers counterattacked.

Ed Slowinski robbed Detroit's Joe Carveth of the puck behind

the Red Wing net. He skimmed a pass to Don "Bones" Raleigh 20 feet in front of the cage. The beanpole center was checked by defenseman Jack Stewart and started to fall as the puck reached him. But he took a desperate backhand swipe at it and fell on his stomach, his eyes riveted on the net.

Somehow, the puck skidded to goalie Harry Lumley's right. The big netminder flashed out his right skate but the rubber barely eluded the goalie's blade, hit the goal post and went into the net at 8:34 of the sudden death, tying the series, 2–2. "No one in the place expected Raleigh to touch the puck, much less score," observed Bill Lauder, Jr. in the *Herald Tribune*.

When it was over, Patrick admitted that Raleigh had no business being on the ice at the time; "He was so tired," said Lynn, "I wanted to keep him off but Nick Mickoski had just been hurt, so I had no choice. I needed bodies and I got a goal."

With the series tied at two goals apiece, the spectre of injuries clouded the Ranger camp as the Blues prepared for game five. Mickoski had suffered a dislocated shoulder and Jackie Gordon was lost for the rest of the series with torn knee ligaments. And, of course, there was the problem of playing another game at unfriendly Olympia.

No matter. Game five was on and the Rangers went out and took a 1–0 lead on Dunc Fisher's goal at 7:44 of the second period, then saw the lead evaporate with less than two minutes remaining in the game when Lindsay sunk his own rebound. The Rangers treated Lindsay's goal as an idle annoyance to be brushed aside as one would a fly on one's knee. And if anyone else was to secure the game, who else but Bones Raleigh, on a pass from, who else but Ed Slowinski. Which is what happened.

The speed, let alone the duplication of the goal, arrested the imagination of the 12,610 spectators. The play evolved with only a minute-and-a-half gone in the overtime, Slowinski captured the puck behind the net, fed Raleigh who unleashed a 10-foot shot that found an opening between Lumley's pads.

"Eddie did all the work," Raleigh insisted. "It was the best pass I've ever had." So New York led, three games to two, and needed one win in the next two games to win the Cup.

The sixth and what Ranger followers believed would be the last game of the series was held at Olympia on Saturday, April 22. To many observers it should have been the finale and those who saw

the game or heard Bert Lee describe it on the radio still have difficulty believing the Rangers ultimately lost. But, they did and here's how the tragedy developed:

Before the Red Wings could find their groove, the Rangers had contrived a 2–0 lead in the first period on goals by Stanley and Fisher. Lindsay reduced the lead by one in the period's final minute but Lund scored at 3:18 of the second to make it 4–2 New York. Again the Red Wings retaliated, tying the score late in the second, and, again the Rangers went ahead in the third on Leswick's goal at 1:54.

The fact was, there was too much Lindsay for the Rangers. The combative left wing stickhandled through three Rangers to tie the score at 4:13. Sid Abel scored the winner at 10:34 after snaring his own rebound in front of Rayner.

And now it was time for the climactic seventh and final game, April 23, at Olympia. For two periods it appeared the Rangers had the Stanley Cup in the bag. Goals by Stanley and Leswick gave them a 2–0 lead after the first period. Detroit tied it in the second at 2–2 but O'Connor put New York ahead again at 11:42 of the middle period.

That was the Rangers' last moment to exult in a lead. Jim McFadden soon was to beat Stanley to the puck and shoot an "impossible" angled shot past Rayner to tie the score. There was nothing left but excruciating overtime; the first goal deciding the game and the Cup winner.

"You could see it coming," said Patrick. "Once the overtime started I figured we were through. The boys just had nothing left."

Well, not quite nothing. They traded blow-for-blow, shot-for-shot with the Red Wings at the hostile Olympia for 20 minutes of the first sudden death and very nearly won the Cup. A shot by Mickoski had Lumley beaten but the puck hit the goal post and went the wrong way.

Now it was the second overtime and the Rangers were still there. But they were tiring fast and you could see the end coming. "The Wings had carried the play to the fading Blueshirts," wrote Lew Walter in the *Detroit Times*, "and had missed goals by hairline margins."

Detroit's George Gee was one who barely missed scoring the winner. He was put in the clear by Pete Babando. Rayner moved slowly out of his cage, 10, 12, 15 feet. Gee shot, Rayner sprawled and smothered the puck. Referee Bill Chadwick, now the color

announcer for Ranger home games, whistled a face-off in deep Ranger zone, to the left of the net.

Patrick sent out Buddy O'Connor, Alex Kaleta, Nick Mickoski, Pat Egan and Allan Stanley. Detroit's unit consisted of Gee, Babando, Doc Couture, Leo Reise and Marcel Pronovost. Gee was to take the face-off against O'Connor.

The Red Wing paused and skated back to Babando. "Move over behind me," Gee said. "You're too far to the left." They proved to be prophetic words.

"I moved over," Babando said later. "I still wasn't far enough because Gee beat O'Connor to the draw and whipped the puck back to my right. I had to reach for it to catch it on my backhand."

More than eight minutes had ticked away in the second sudden death when Gee won the draw. Rayner was at the near corner of the net as the puck moved toward Babando. The Ranger goalie's view was obscured by Stanley, his defenseman.

"When the puck hit my stick," Babando recalled, "I just let fly through the scramble. I wasn't sure the shot was on the net."

It was.

The puck followed a straight line, two feet off the ice. It flitted past Gee, past Stanley and past Couture toward a three-foot opening at the right corner. Rayner knew the shot was coming but he couldn't find the puck because of the confusion of bodies in front of him. "I never saw it coming," said Rayner. At the last second he fell to the ice kicking out his left pad in a spreadeagle split. But he felt nothing hit his pads.

Intuitively, his head turned behind to the left—toward the net. The puck was there in the corner, along with the Rangers' shattered dreams.

When the cheering had subsided and the Rangers had wiped away their tears, Red Wing captain Sid Abel walked into the New York dressing room and gave the Blueshirts the finest testimonial they could have received short of winning the cup. Abel pumped Rayner's hand, looked around the room and said to the other New Yorkers: "Don't you guys know when to quit?"

The Rangers suffered another depression in the early fifties but, this time, manager Boucher had planted the seeds of what was to be another successful farm system. The chief source of talent would be the Guelph (Ontario) Biltmores of the Ontario Hockey Association Junior A Division. Exceptional youngsters such as Andy Bath-

gate, Harry Howell, Dean Prentice, Aldo Guidolin, Lou Fontinato and Ron Murphy were being groomed in Guelph for delivery to the NHL. But the crisis in New York worsened and Boucher was compelled to promote the youngsters before they were ripe for the NHL. Impatient, the Garden brass finally coerced Boucher into stepping down as manager. He was replaced in the spring of 1955 by Muzz Patrick and Phil Watson was hired as coach.

Capitalizing on the youngsters developed by Boucher's farm system, Watson guided the Rangers to the playoffs in 1955–56, 1956–57, and 1957–58. There was every likelihood that he would do it again in 1958–59 but the team suddenly folded in the last two weeks of the season and was beaten out by the Maple Leafs. Watson eventually was fired and the Rangers sank into the trough again until the 1961–62 season when Doug Harvey, the former star of the Montreal Canadiens' defense, signed as player coach and directed the club to the playoffs where Toronto eliminated the Rangers in a six-game semifinal.

Another playoff famine developed and the fortunes of the Rangers appeared dismal under Patrick's managership until he was relieved of the position in the fall of 1964 and replaced by Emile Francis. The dynamic Francis immediately began rebuilding.

The Francis regime produced a hockey team that emphasized balance more than stars and combined robust play with classical passing maneuvers. Husky skaters such as Reg Fleming, Vic Hadfield and Orland Kurtenbach lent the muscle so conspicuously lacking in other Ranger teams while the line of Phil Goyette, Don Marshall and Bob Nevin displayed the brand of passing and scoring that was reminiscent of the Cook Brothers and Boucher.

When goalie Jacques Plante temporarily retired, Francis obtained Ed Giacomin from the Providence Reds of the American League. Untried in the NHL, Giacomin alternately starred and then erred grievously in his rookie season. But Francis stuck by his goalie. The decision would ultimately make or break the manager. Giacomin again was erratic in his sophomore year and then, suddenly, recovered to win the first All-Star Team nomination. The Rangers finished in the playoffs for the first time in four years and Francis clinched his job.

He also managed to lure Bernie (Boom Boom) Geoffrion out of retirement after Geoffrion had coached the Quebec Aces of the American League for two years. Onetime NHL scoring champion, Geoffrion infused the Rangers with a dressing room spirit they had

lacked and bolstered the power play. Despite a worsening ulcer condition, Geoffrion helped the team to its second playoff berth in two years in 1967–68 and then succumbed to a serious stomach operation. Upon his recovery he was offered the coaching job by Francis and took over bench duties at the start of the 1968–69 season until illness forced him to quit in 1969.

Geoffrion had inherited a solid defense featuring Harry Howell, Arnie Brown, Jim Neilson and Rod Seiling—all developed by Francis—and solid forwards such as Rod Gilbert, Jean Ratelle, Dave Balon and Ron Stewart. He also was aware that the Rangers had been unable to win the Stanley Cup since 1940 and have not finished first since 1942. The familiar cry of "Wait 'til next year" had become a bore with Ranger fans and its alteration became Geoffrion's major target. But when Geoffrion departed, Francis guided the club to third place, and the Rangers were wiped out of the 1969 playoffs in four games by Montreal.

New York finished fourth in an 11th hour grab of a playoff berth in April 1970 but lasted only through the first playoff round in which the Bruins eliminated the Rangers in six games.

Determined to catch Boston in 1970–71, Francis executed several changes in the Rangers lineup. He dealt defenseman Arnie Brown as well as rookies Don Luce, Jim Krulicki and Mike Robitaille to Detroit. In return he obtained defenseman Dale Rolfe and forwards Bruce MacGregor and Peter Stemkowski. Rookie center Syl Apps Jr. was sent to Pittsburgh for utility forward Glen Sather.

Although New York finished second in the East, far behind Boston, the Rangers rallied to eliminate Toronto in the first round of the 1971 playoffs and then played valiantly before losing to Chicago in the seventh game of the semifinal. Stemkowski was a hero, winning two games with sudden death goals, one in a third overtime.

The frustrations of failing to finish first or win the Stanley Cup continued to plague Francis' flock. The only team in the league to make the playoffs for seven consecutive years through the spring of 1973, the Rangers entered the Cup finals in 1972 for the first time in 22 years by beating Montreal and whipping Chicago but bowed in six games to Boston. The following year they rid themselves of their Bruin tormentors in the first round only to be shocked out in five games by the Black Hawks in the semifinals.

Rangers developed a new star in rookie Steve Vickers, who combined with the Bulldogs, Walter Tkaczuk and Billy Fairbairn,

to form their most solid line. The highly-rated GAG Line (goal-a-game), which accounted for 139 goals in 1971–72, dropped to 94 in 1972–73 and in the playoffs only Rod Gilbert acquitted himself in an above-average manner. Jean Ratelle continued his poor lifetime playoff performance and Vic Hadfield, after a bumpy season, marred by his defection from Team Canada and a series of crippling injuries, failed to ignite any sparks.

Emile Francis, who brought the once-lowly Rangers to respectability and serious contention, still found the Holy Grail of hockey beyond his grasp. Before the 1973–74 season he relinquished his dual role of general manager-coach and turned over the bench reins to former Ranger center Larry Popein who had been coaching in the New York organization at Providence. This move did not seem likely to bring the Cup to Manhattan, a place it had not rested since before World War II.

Toronto Maple Leafs

THE TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS, as we know them today, have roots extending back to 1917 when a club known as the Toronto Arenas was admitted to the National Hockey League. Eddie Livingstone, a Toronto lawyer, ran the Torontos and somehow managed to antagonize his colleagues in Ottawa and Montreal, the other hotbeds of the young NHL just after World War I. In 1919 the Toronto Arenas were replaced by the Toronto St. Patricks (St. Pats), managed by Charles Querrie, a former lacrosse star who had become a sportswriter.

While Querrie was running the St. Pats, a young, dynamic man named Conn Smythe was becoming more and more vocal in Toronto hockey circles. Smythe had a heroic air because of his exploits in World War I. He had gone overseas with the Fortieth Battery, transferred to the Air Force; been shot down while on reconnaissance duty; been made a prisoner of war; been placed in solitary confinement by the Germans after he had tried to escape; and, after the armistice, he returned to Toronto to coach the University of Toronto Junior Hockey Team (alias Varsity). In time Smythe's teams grabbed headlines. He became coach of the Senior Team at the University (Varsity Grads) and won the Allan Cup, emblematic of senior hockey supremacy in Canada, in 1926. The following year the Grads went on to the Olympics. Smythe didn't make that trip. He had been contracted by Colonel John Hammond, president of the newly organized New York Rangers, to obtain hockey players for the Manhattan franchise. Smythe, who had set

the NHL as his target, relished the assignment until he suffered a severe personality collision with Colonel Hammond and was dismissed.

The Ranger president had heard that Babe Dye was a superb player and requested that Smythe obtain him. The colonel became furious when he learned that Smythe was at a football game and missed a chance to buy Dye for the Rangers. In a typical counter-attack, Smythe insisted he didn't want Dye at any price. He explained that he was organizing a young team and Dye was an older player. Colonel Hammond didn't buy the logic and dismissed Smythe after presenting him with a check for $7,500. This was $2,500 less than the original price he had signed for but Smythe didn't care.

Smythe bore no grudge against Tex Rickard, president of Madison Square Garden. After Smythe's dismissal, Rickard approached his former employee and asked whether he thought the Rangers could hold the powerful Montreal Maroons to a respectable score in the first game the Rangers would play at the Garden. "If you keep your eyes open," countered Smythe, "you'll see the Rangers win. This is a pretty good hockey club, Mister."

When the Rangers did win Rickard was so impressed he sought out Smythe, hoping he'd return to the Garden fold. "I wouldn't work for Madison Square Garden for any price," said Smythe, betraying what was to develop into one of the sharpest antagonisms in the NHL.

Always the sportsman, Rickard, upon hearing how Smythe had been shortchanged $2,500, ordered that the money be given to the young Torontonian. Smythe bet the found money on a football game between the University of Toronto and McGill University, won, and then bet on the Rangers in a game against the Toronto St. Pats, won again, and then was ready to make his big bid in the NHL.

Later, with a group of ex-World War I veterans, Smythe and the syndicate bought the Toronto St. Pats from Charlie Querrie for $165,000. At first it looked like a buy. But after the first season's receipts totaled only $113,000, some of the supporters began to wonder. Smythe was undaunted. He remained convinced that there was a bonanza in professional hockey and believed the bonanza lay in the building of an ultramodern arena. Since Smythe had changed the name of the St. Pats to the Maple Leafs it was only natural that the new structure be called Maple Leaf Gardens. However, it wouldn't have been at all illogical to have named it

Smythe Gardens, for the inspired promoter spurred the project forward during one of the most despairing periods in the nation's history. Maple Leaf Gardens was in the planning-financing stages at the moment when the stock market crashed in 1929. To keep the construction moving, workmen accepted part of their pay in stock. When money ran out, one of Smythe's chums, J. P. Bickell, always managed to produce a few hundred thousand more.

Part of Smythe's genius was his ability to surround himself with men of equal energy and foresight. One such man was Frank Selke, who suggested, when Smythe's St. Pats were losing: "Just fire the old men you have playing on your team now. Replace them with these young bucks I have with me on the [Toronto] Marlboros. Do that and you'll never look back."

Selke was right, but it would take more than inexperienced young players. What Smythe needed was a superstar to draw the fans to Maple Leaf Gardens and, without skimping on money, he went out and got him. As luck would have it—and Smythe had a surplus of luck—Frank (King) Clancy, a wiry defensive star, was put up for trade by the Ottawa Senators. Smythe offered the Senators $35,000 plus two hockey players whose value he estimated at $15,000. In those days the price was considered exorbitant, even for a player of Clancy's ability; but the flamboyant defenseman was soon to prove that Smythe was wise in spending heavily for him. "It undoubtedly is fair to say," wrote Milt Dunnell, sports editor of the *Toronto Daily Star*, "that one person more than any other, was responsible for lifting the mortgage: King Clancy. Getting the King was one of the smartest moves Smythe ever made." With Clancy as the nucleus, Smythe built a powerful club that won the Stanley Cup for the Maple Leafs in 1931–32. His goaltender was Lorne Chabot, never the best but always more than adequate. In addition to Clancy, his defense was anchored by Clarence (Hap) Day, the team captain who had given up a career as a pharmacist to play for the Leafs. In addition there was Alex Levinsky, Harold (Baldy) Cotton, Irvin (Ace) Bailey, Andy Blair, Frank Finnegan and Red Horner, all able pros.

A strong trio in the club was the Kid Line of Joe Primeau at center, Charlie Conacher at right wing and Harvey (Busher) Jackson at left. "This threesome was truly a sight to behold," wrote Selke in his biography *Behind The Cheering*. "When coach Dick Irvin sent the trio onto the ice the fans teetered on the edges of their seats and an electric tension seemed to permeate the entire audi-

torium. There have been other great forward lines in hockey but none could match the frenzy that greeted Toronto's Kid Line in the mid-thirties."

As hockey teams go, the Leafs of the early thirties certainly could pass for an ice version of the St. Louis Cardinals Gashouse Gang along with the Americans of New York. Pranks were the order of just about any day and, usually, Clancy was the butt of them. One day, Charlie Conacher and Hap Day decided to readjust Clancy's alarm clock by setting it ahead a few hours. They then ordered the room clerk in the Boston hotel at which they camped to phone Clancy and tell him he was late for the game. When Clancy got the message and stared at the readjusted clock, he speedily dressed, dashed down the hotel stairs and out the door where he hailed a cab. He demanded that the cabbie get him to Boston Garden extra fast because he was late for the start of the hockey game. When the driver told him it was more than two hours before game time, Clancy ordered the cab around and returned to the hotel where Day and Conacher were sitting in the lobby unable to contain their laughter.

Although Clancy was the court jester of the Leafs he also was a leader of sorts simply because he refused to admit defeat. One night the Leafs were involved in a major brawl with the Montreal Maroons. Clancy mistakenly selected Harold Starr, an enormous Maroon defenseman, as his opponent. Starr wiped the ice with Clancy, sat on the Toronto player and thoroughly routed him until Clancy bellowed "Let me up! Let me up!" Starr complied but, in so doing, added, "Well, I licked you good, eh, Clancy?"

While the witnessing players convulsed themselves with laughter, Clancy replied at the top of his lungs: "Starr, you never saw the day you could lay a hand on me!"

In some ways Harold (Baldy) Cotton was as amusing a character as Clancy. He hurled his body around the ice without fear of collision and, as a result, often found himself at odds with the law of gravity. One writer commented: "Cotton's goal-scoring stance was often on one or even both ears."

Smythe was just as ebullient as his players. One summer when hockey news was practically nowhere to be read, Leo Dandurand, a part owner of the Montreal Canadiens, phoned Smythe just to pass the time of day. As a conversation piece, Dandurand wondered what Smythe thought about the possibility of a trade. "I'll give you my goaltender, George Hainsworth for yours, Lorne Chabot," said

Dandurand. "A change of scenery might be good for both of them."

Of course Dandurand was sure Smythe wouldn't bite. After all, Chabot had played excellent hockey for him. But before Dandurand could grasp what was happening, Smythe replied: "It's a deal" and hung up. When the Montreal official recovered, he phoned Smythe and the two worked out a mutually satisfactory release date for announcing the deal.

Smythe's record wasn't perfect. He often was outwitted by Major Frederic McLaughlin, the socialite owner of the Chicago Black Hawks. McLaughlin had a ploy that often duped Smythe. He would call the Leafs' boss and suggest that one or two of the Black Hawk stars were becoming jaded in Chicago. Perhaps Smythe was interested in them. His appetite sharp for a deal, Smythe would take the first available train to Chicago to talk trade with McLaughlin. However, by the time he arrived, Smythe discovered that the Major had cooled considerably on the subject of a deal and would suggest negotiating for some second- or third-line skater that didn't really appeal to Smythe. But he had made that long trip. "First thing you knew," Smythe admitted, "you'd buy some guy who wasn't worth a nickel. It was either that or return to Toronto empty-handed."

The Leafs' Stanley Cup triumph in 1931–32 was the tip-off that Smythe had developed a dynasty. In the following season the Leafs finished first in the Canadian division of the NHL and Harvey Jackson led the division in scoring. The Leafs then engaged the Boston Bruins, who finished first in the American division, in the first round of the Stanley Cup playoffs. The best of five series was tied, 2–2, when the final—and most spectacular game—was held at Maple Leaf Gardens on April 2, 1933.

For three periods the teams struggled without a score, forcing the game into sudden-death overtime. There was no score in the first sudden-death and none in the second. As the energy-sapping contest labored on into the third and fourth sudden death Art Ross of the Bruins and Smythe asked NHL President Frank Calder for permission to halt the game at the end of 100 minutes so that the clubs could resume fresh the next night. "Nothing doing," Calder replied, "the game must be finished tonight."

The Bruins came up with an alternate suggestion; they'd toss a coin and the winner would move on to the next round. Smythe and the Leafs agreed. They moved out to center ice and prepared to begin the ritual, but the 14,539 spectators were appalled by the idea and urged the Leafs to continue the game. The Toronto club agreed

to continue although Calder had suggested that each team remove its goaltender to make scoring easier but the players refused this idea and the gruelling contest resumed.

Shortly after the four-minute mark of the sixth overtime—each overtime period lasted 20 minutes—Andy Blair of the Leafs captured the puck from Eddie Shore, the Bruins' all-star defenseman. Blair passed the puck ahead to tiny Ken Doraty who raced into Boston territory and scored the winning goal at 164:46 (4:46 of the sixth overtime) for a 1–0 victory. The game ended at 2 A.M. on April 3 and was the longest game played in the NHL up until that time.

The heroic Doraty soon was traded to Cleveland as Smythe began paring the Leaf roster to make way for new blood. Detroit bought Hec Kilrea, Hal Cotton went to the New York Americans with Hap Day and Chicago bought Andy Blair. By 1936 King Clancy had retired and the Conacher–Primeau–Jackson era was rapidly coming to an end. Smythe assiduously replaced them but with not quite the same success as he enjoyed in the early thirties, though he did manage to obtain some interesting characters.

One of them was Bingo Kampman, a huge defenseman who had played for the Sudbury team that won the Allan Cup. Kampman was perhaps the strongest man ever to play in the NHL and often would perform tricks to display his power. A favorite was—after, naturally, placing some small bets—to lift a full-scale table by biting into its sides with his teeth and then, by sheer force, lifting it off the ground.

Another colorful type was Walter (Turk) Broda, a goaltender Smythe discovered by accident. The Leaf boss had visited Windsor, Ontario, to scout Earl Robertson, a goaltender then playing for the Windsor Bulldogs. Although Smythe was impressed with Robertson he was even more entranced by the youth who was playing opposite him for the Detroit Olympics. After the game, Smythe asked Jim Norris, president of the Detroit Red Wings, what he wanted for the goaltender. Norris, certain that Smythe was referring to Robertson, asked for $8,000. When Smythe told him he wanted Broda he asked for the same price. It was a steal, judging by the fact that Broda played 15 years for the Leafs and became known as the best clutch goalie in the NHL.

Smythe was equally as fortunate one afternoon when he and his wife were watching a football game between McMaster University and a Toronto intermediate club. Smythe's attention was arrested

by a large McMaster halfback who appeared to be manipulating the game with an assortment of runs, catches and kicks. After the game Smythe inquired whether the player knew how to play hockey. He was told that Sylvanus Apps was, indeed, an accomplished hockey player, not to mention the best pole vaulter in Canada.

Apps, however, was not persuaded that he should pursue a hockey career with the pros. He wanted to compete in the 1936 Olympics and also considered other careers when the Olympics were over. But he agreed to meet with Smythe when the games ended. Once Apps returned he couldn't refuse Smythe's offer. He signed with the Maple Leafs and became one of Canada's most respected hockey players. He won the Calder Trophy as rookie of the year in his first season and, in time, became captain and leader of the Leafs during their golden era of the late forties.

Many observers contend that the Toronto hockey renaissance began in 1941 when Clarence (Hap) Day, the former Leaf defenseman, was named coach of the club. The choice was not surprising. Day had joined the Leafs in 1926 and, except for three years, remained one of the most loyal and effective Toronto players until he was traded to the Americans in 1937–38. "Anything good about a man can be said about Day," Smythe commented.

With Day running the team, the Leafs finished second, only three points behind the Rangers, and promptly knocked off New York in six games of the Stanley Cup opening round. They wound up meeting the Detroit Red Wings in the finals and appeared a good bet to defeat the Red Wings who had finished fourth, 15 points behind Toronto. But the Detroit club was guided by manager Jack Adams who had a habit of lifting his club to extraordinary heights against the Leafs. "We may not have the greatest hockey club in the world," Adams said on the eve of the first game, "but we're loaded with fighting heart. And if there's anything that wins championships it's just that."

Detroit then proceeded to win the first three games of the best of seven championship round and thoroughly startled the Leafs, not to mention the hockey world. From all appearances the Leafs were finished and the fact that coach Day decided to bench high-scoring Gordie Drillon and defenseman Bucko McDonald merely confirmed the critics' suspicions. In their place Day inserted an unheard of utility player, Don Metz, and vowed to use more of his brother, Nick Metz. However, the strategy appeared futile. The Wings took a 2–0 lead early in the second period. Still, the Leafs persisted. They

tied the score 2–2, fell behind 3–2 in the third period, tied it again on Sylvanus Apps' goal and won it on a score by Nick Metz. The defeat angered the Detroiters to such an extent that Don Grosso and Eddie Wares of the Red Wings became embroiled in an argument with referee Mel Harwood and were fined $50 and $25, respectively. At this point Jack Adams raced across the ice and began tossing punches at Harwood. NHL President Frank Calder required a police escort from the Olympia Stadium and later announced the indefinite suspension of Adams and prohibited him from taking any further part in the bench management of the Red Wings. Ebbie Goodfellow handled the Wings in the remaining games of the series.

The Leafs mauled Detroit, 9–3, in the fifth game, then topped the Wings, 3–0, in the sixth game back at Olympia. Never before had an NHL team lost the first three games of a Stanley Cup final and rebounded to win the next four. But on April 18, 1942, the Toronto club defeated the Red Wings, 3–1, at Maple Leaf Gardens, and Hap Day was enroute to many more NHL records.

Curiously, in the 1944–45 season, the Leafs again encountered the Red Wings in the Stanley Cup final and this time Toronto won the first three games and lost the next three to Detroit. But the Red Wings couldn't duplicate the feat of 1942 and dropped the final game, 2–1, and the series. Although Day had now won two Stanley Cups in only four years of coaching the accomplishments were merely a prelude for things to come.

Smythe, who again led a Canadian expedition to France, returned to Toronto after World War II and became deeply involved in running the team again. He was dismayed over the 1945–46 team, which ran fifth, and insisted that the new Toronto club would be built around a few veterans and liberally sprinkled with youth. No doubt, the club provided more action than Smythe had bargained for. The team finished second to Montreal and then defeated the Red Wings and Canadiens to win the Cup they weren't supposed to win for another two years. It was the beginning of one of the greatest hockey machines the NHL had ever known.

"I should have figured it out years ago," Smythe said. "Youth is the answer in this game. Only the kids have the drive, the fire and ambition. Put the kids in with a few old pappy guys who still like to win and the combination is unbeatable."

The pappy guys were portly goalie Turk Broda, whom Smythe was to describe as "the best playoff player in all hockey"; Syl Apps, a majestically tall center, described by writer Vince Lunny as "a Rembrandt on the ice, a Nijinsky at the goal mouth"; Nick and Don Metz, the supreme utility players, who killed penalties with extraordinary efficiency and took regular turns on the forward line; and Wally Stanowski, who skated like Sonja Henie and hit like Gus Lesnevich.

But without the kids there wouldn't have been any mustard and without the mustard the Leafs would have been a bland, second-rate outfit. Nobody symbolized the kids more than "Bashing" Bill Barilko, who had the face of a Beatle, the body of a bronco and the brashness of a gate crasher. Smythe imported Barilko from the Hollywood Wolves, a minor league team, and Barilko exploded on the NHL scene, in the midst of the 1946–47 season, although he was practically barren of hockey rudiments. His skating was so poor he would run several yards on the points of his blades to catapult himself into motion. His sense of strategy was crude, but he developed his "snake hips" bodycheck so well opponents stayed away from his side of the ice if they could help it, and he loved to win. And so did his mates. But more than that, they loved to fight.

The Leaf line-up was something out of a Golden Gloves program. There was (Wild) Bill Ezinicki, who once had four teeth knocked out in a homestretch game; he was suffering from pain and nervous shock, yet returned to score the winning goal against Boston. And the impudent Gold Dust Twins, defensemen Jim Thomson and Gus Mortson. Not to mention such rollicking types as Howie Meeker, Joe Klukay, Vic Lynn, Ted (Teeder) Kennedy and Garth Boesch, the only mustachioed player in hockey.

They punched, clutched, grabbed and thoroughly infuriated their foes. They so enraged Montreal coach Dick Irvin after a win at the Forum that Irvin kicked a live Santa Claus out of the Canadiens' dressing room.

They were inventive. Boesch and Barilko created the tandem Maginot Line knee-drop. A split second before an enemy would shoot the puck they'd drop to their knees, blocking the shot—a technique that later was copied by other defensemen around the league. Nick Metz and Klukay devised the modern penalty-killing style of vigilant forechecking.

And, in time, they were to have a superstar, although they lacked him at first. In fact, the Leafs were so bereft of supermen it was something of a local joke in Toronto because they failed to place a single player on the league All-Star Team even though they had

won the Stanley Cup in 1947. "We may not have the all-stars," countered their coach Hap Day, "but we have the champions."

Instead of treating them with respect, many opponents regarded Smythe's Leafs as if they were the Dead End Kids. "They are the worst team in the league for holding, tripping and interfering," snapped Ranger coach Frank Boucher. But Smythe couldn't have cared less. If the Leafs indulged in jungle warfare it was only because they were reflecting the behavior of their master who had shown bravery in two world wars. Major Smythe won the Military Cross in 1916 and then transferred to the Royal Flying Corps where, as a reconnaissance pilot, he was "mentioned in dispatches." The Germans captured him after he crashed behind the lines in 1917, and he spent 14 months in a prison camp.

He was supposed to be too old to fight in World War II, but he organized an antiaircraft battery and shipped out to England. One night, during a unit softball game in the south of England, the Little Major was playing third base. With two out and runner on second, Smythe moved back of third to catch a pop fly. Just as he reached for the ball the runner from second crashed into him and Smythe fell to the ground. His ribs were broken and twice he fell unconscious. But he wasn't going to be stopped. "Any guy who peeps about this can expect a court-martial," he said.

They took him to a civilian doctor who patched Smythe's side where there were four broken ribs. And four days later he led his men into France.

Less than a month later a German reconnaissance plane dropped flares over the battery's headquarters. One of them fell into a tarpaulin covering an ammunition truck. Realizing that the ammunition might erupt within seconds, Smythe directed removal of the flare.

But before the soldiers could move, the truck exploded, killing two men. A chunk of shrapnel hit Smythe, grazed his spine and missed paralyzing him permanently by a fraction of an inch. Lying amid the dirt and metal, Smythe refused to quit: "I'm all right," he shouted at his troops, "get those fires out!"

This was the spirit Smythe transmitted to his Maple Leafs and they reflected it like soldiers. To some it came naturally. Howie Meeker, the speedy crew-cut right wing on the new Kid Line, had been wounded overseas when a grenade blew up in his face. He was told by doctors he'd never play hockey again. Meeker was unimpressed. In 1947 he won the Calder Trophy as NHL's rookie of the year. Vic Lynn, also of the Kid Line, was not a super scorer but he was big and rough and hit hard. Ted Kennedy, the third member, couldn't skate a lick but whenever you looked up he had the puck. As a unit, their gears meshed perfectly.

Losing in Smythe's book was sinful, but losing AND getting pushed around was utter heresy. In the spring of 1947 the Red Wings pulverized the Leafs, 9–1, in the opening round of the Stanley Cup semifinals. This annoyed Smythe. But the fact that Detroit's fearsome Black Jack Stewart had clobbered his young defenseman, Jim Thomson, with a left hook and wasn't slugged back infuriated him.

"Nobody," warned Smythe, "pops anybody in this club without getting popped back. I'm not interested in hockey players who don't play to win. You can take penalties, but you gotta play to win." In the next four games, Thomson laid the beef on Stewart and the Leafs swept all four games and the series.

There was a bromide that Smythe would fire any player who won the Lady Byng Trophy for gentlemanly conduct but that wasn't entirely true. His captain, Syl Apps, was a chronic contender for the Byng and Smythe would proudly introduce Apps to audiences as "Syl Apps, our captain, who does not smoke or drink." Coincidentally, Smythe himself never smoked nor drank.

With Apps at the helm, the Leafs upset Montreal in six games to win the Cup in April 1947, but Smythe, enthused as he was, still was slightly dubious about his budding powerhouse. When the 1947–48 season opened the Leafs were a good team the way the Los Angeles Dodgers were a good team and won the pennant in 1966. But the Dodgers had Sandy Koufax and the Leafs didn't. The Koufax that Smythe wanted—and knew he needed for first place—was a superstar playing for the Chicago Black Hawks. His name was Max Bentley, a wiry center who skated like a scared jack rabbit and shot like a bazooka and who had led the league in scoring the previous two seasons.

With the swift, smooth Apps and the tenacious, tough Kennedy in his line-up, Smythe had two of the best centers in the league but that wasn't enough; not for the superteam he wanted to create. "Strength down center is the key to a great team," he said. And when the Leafs fumbled their way through the opening month of the season he knew he needed Bentley, so Smythe opened negotiations with Chicago President Bill Tobin.

Tobin had to deal. Even with aces such as Max and Doug Bentley, the Hawks were floundering around last place with no

signs of improvement. Tobin offered Smythe $15,000 each for Gus Bodnar, Elwyn Morris, and Bob Goldham. Smythe was furious. "I repeatedly told Tobin that we're after players, not money." But Smythe had the answer. He came up with a package of five first-rate players—Gus Bodnar, Bud Poile, Gaye Stewart, Bob Goldham, and Ernie Dickens—and offered them to Tobin for Bentley and an unknown rookie, Cy Thomas. It was an astonishing proposal because Bodnar, Poile and Stewart comprised the Flying Fort line and Goldham and Dickens were a defense combination. So, all that Tobin lacked for a complete team was a goaltender.

Smythe, of course, was taking a gamble of enormous proportions. Max Bentley, for all his talent, was hypersensitive and hypochondriacal. The split with brother Doug might ruin him mentally and artistically. And who could tell when his numerous imaginary aches and pains would return to plague him and the Leafs.

But Smythe had become obsessed with visions of Max in the royal blue and white Leaf uniform. He made the offer and on November 3, 1947, Tobin accepted to complete what then was described as "the greatest mass trade in professional hockey history." Smythe had parted with four extremely popular players in Bodnar, Poile, Stewart, and Goldham and now he had a lot of explaining to do.

"Our purpose in making the deal," he told stunned Leaf fans, "relates to the center ice position. If anything were to happen to Syl Apps we would be desperate. I feel it's quite a gamble but it's worth it." Bentley was valued at $75,000 on the hockey market and Thomas, $15,000. The Chicago package was priced at $95,000.

Although the deal had been rumored for several days, the Bentleys were stunned by the announcement. Their 74-year-old father, William Bentley, said it was a mistake. "If I were they," said Papa Bentley from his farm in Deslisle, Saskatchewan, "I wouldn't have done it."

Max was heartbroken. "Having to play without my older brother," Max said, "made me feel like I lost my right arm." And, for a while, it seemed that way. As a Leaf, Max went 10 straight games without a goal until he found himself. Then he started scoring and never stopped.

Unlike his new teammates, Max was a fragile pacifist who needed police protection. Fortunately, the Leafs had handsome Bill Ezinicki around and that was enough to distract anybody from Max. Ezinicki was not much bigger than Bentley but he had sinewy arms and a body that bulged from daily weight-lifting. He had a passion for free-skating that was outdone only by his passion for bodychecking. "I love to bodycheck," he'd say. "I don't care if they bodycheck me. In fact, I love that, too."

He also had a passion for tape. He'd stick reams of tape around his stick, his knees and his shoulder guards. And he had a passion for drinking water. He was, in fact, a very passionate hockey player and tough.

He'd collide with opponents—usually bigger opponents—from every direction. Sometimes, he'd wait for an opponent to speed in his direction, then he'd bend forward, extend his hips and the foe would fly over him and to the ice. Then, there was the "Ezzie orbit" which ex-Montreal Canadien defenseman Glen Harmon recalled:

"He'd circle his own defense and catch an opposing puck carrier circling from the far side of the defense. We were playing against him once and Ken Reardon came down in a mad rush. He was off-balance, circling, head down, one knee bent and frantically concentrating on retaining possession of the puck when Ezzie caught him with what we called 'the Ezinicki iron shoulder pad'—a regular shoulder pad reinforced with tape.

"Ezzie's shoulder caught Kenny squarely on the jaw. Kenny went down with a crash, rolled over, lurched unsteadily on his knees, then to his skates. His legs were so wobbly he looked like he was giving one of those comic drunk routines. His eyes were actually crossed."

The Canadiens had a theory that if they could neutralize Ezinicki they could beat the Leafs. Jim Coleman, columnist for the Southam newspaper chain in Canada, described one such expedition: "Ezinicki performed in a robust manner and took a whack at everyone without bothering to examine their license plates. Les Canadiens were looking for him, too, but scored only one point when Glen Harmon cross-checked Ezzie on the chops and escaped without a penalty." Other Canadiens went after Ezzie and took penalties. "Those penalties cost Canadiens two goals," added Coleman, "and Leafs won, 3–1."

A week later the Canadiens tried again. "Canadiens continued to spend a lot of time in a futile attempt to soften up Ezinicki," wrote Jim Vipond in the *Toronto Globe and Mail.* "The Toronto winger took them all on singly, two at a time and on one occasion was mixed up in a melee with four of the enemy. He hit Maurice Richard so

hard once that the Rocket crashed into the door to the Leafs' bench, knocking it off the hinges."

Ezinicki was adored in Toronto and vilified wherever else he played. In Detroit, the Red Wings charged him with deliberately injuring goalie Harry Lumley. In Boston, *Globe* writer Herb Ralby said, "Toronto has the leading candidate for the most hated opponent in Ezinicki."

On November 8, Ezinicki crumpled Ranger center Edgar Laprade to the ice with a bodycheck. Laprade suffered a concussion and Ranger coach Frank Boucher protested to NHL President Clarence Campbell with a scathing telegram:

LAPRADE IN HOSPITAL WITH CONCUSSION FROM CHARGE BY EZINICKI AFTER WHISTLE ON AN OFFSIDE PLAY. REFEREE GEORGE GRAVEL CLAIMS HE DID NOT SEE OFFENSE. HOW MUCH LONGER IS EZINICKI GOING TO GET AWAY WITH ELBOWING, HIGH-STICKING AND DELIBERATE INJURIES TO OPPONENTS? BELIEVE CURB MUST BE PUT ON THIS PLAYER IMMEDIATELY.

Smythe swiftly counterattacked and urged Campbell to fine Boucher $1,000 for "acting in a manner prejudicial to the league." Smythe's trump card was a movie of the action. He offered to have a special screening for Boucher and six New York writers who were visiting Toronto. Boucher refused, and Smythe chortled: "They don't want to see a legal bodycheck. It might give their players a bad habit."

Eleven days after the incident Campbell completed his investigation and exonerated Ezinicki. "Reports of the officials," said Campbell, "show that the check by Ezinicki was perfectly legal and not a charge. The injury to Laprade was not caused by Ezinicki's stick but by Laprade striking the ice as he fell."

Soon after Campbell's decision Smythe was named president of Maple Leaf Gardens and Ezinicki was toasted by some of his most fearsome opponents. "He's a tough little guy," said Montreal's Ken Reardon, "but he's definitely not dirty. He can check and pester you and sometimes hurt you, and he can make you mad, but he's not dirty. Because he's short he can hurt. Those low bodychecks of his enable him to throw his shoulder into your stomach."

Ezzie's linemates were Boy Scouts by comparison. Leaf wing Harry Watson was a passive type who never seemed to get out of second gear and into high. Captain Syl Apps was positively angelic, but always played in high gear.

"Apps is the cleanest player I've known," said his coach, Hap Day. "I used to figure I came pretty close to being that myself. I didn't drink and I didn't smoke but I used to do my share of swearing. That's where Apps has me beaten. He doesn't smoke; in fact, he never started. He never bends an elbow except to twist his stick over an opponent's wrist. The strongest language he ever uses is 'By hum' and 'Jiminy Christmas'."

One night Boston defenseman Flash Hollett extracted two of Apps' teeth by shoving the thick wooden shaft of his stick in Syl's mouth. The Leaf captain muttered, "By hum, this has gone far enough," and then leveled Hollett with a flurry of punches.

Apps shocked the hockey world late in the 1947–48 season with an announcement that he'd retire after the playoffs. This was unheard of. The captain was only 33, physically fit, one of the NHL's leading scorers, the most popular player in Canada, and apparently capable of reaching the 200-goal plateau early the next season. "Sure I'd like to finish with 200 goals," Apps said in explaining his decision, "but I've got my family to think of and I can't go on playing forever, so I've made up my mind to retire."

Stunned as they were, the Leafs had too many jokers around to remain melancholy for very long. Whenever there was need for a gaff —or, whenever there was no need for one—goalie Turk Broda had one handy. The corpulent netminder, who looked more like a haberdashery salesman, was alternately laughed with and laughed at.

Once, after shutting out the Red Wings, Turk was rushed by his happy teammates. But Broda ignored them. He was busy scooping up a bunch of cigars a fan had tossed in his direction. When one of the Leafs tried to shake his hand, Turk insulted his pal. The player had accidentally skated over one of Turk's cigars.

"I wish they'd stop complimenting me," Turk complained. "It makes me nervous. Every time I read those nice things about me I get a nasty hunch that Smythe's getting ready to sell me to Chicago. I don't carry enough life insurance to play for Chicago. I'll just have to go out and play a bad game so that the boys will pan me and Smythe will be forced to keep me around for a couple of years."

Then there was droll Nick Metz who, like Apps, was to announce his retirement at the end of the season. Metz often played wing on the Max Bentley line although Nick insisted he never knew whether it was Max or brother Doug or one of the other numerous Bentleys skating with him.

"I used to play baseball against the Bentleys," Metz liked to tell

the boys in the dressing room. "There were five of them and you couldn't tell 'em apart. Max, who was the best, would get a hit, reach first and then there'd be a huddle of the five Bentleys. When the conference broke up there would be a Bentley on first all right, but it always seemed to be Max who was batting again. Trouble was, we never could prove it."

The Leafs' trainer was Tim Daly, a short, fat, churlish ex-fighter who delivered lines in fractured Brooklynese. His banter was enough to keep an injured man in the line-up rather than on the dressing room table, and his vocabulary was just this side of incomprehensible. Once, when the Leafs were failing to bodycheck, he observed, "There's too much sediment on this team." Another time, a rookie asked Tim how his arm had become seared. Daly replied, "A hot pipe leans against me."

If Tim's phrase-warping turned off some Leafs, it never bothered Ezinicki who was a regular visitor to Daly's quarters. Ezzie owned an insurance policy with a $100 premium that guaranteed $5 for every stitch required to close an injury received in a hockey game. Ezzie regarded the patchwork the way a housewife would trading stamps. "It's just like double indemnity," he'd say.

Lurking almost unnoticed behind this merry menagerie was Clarence (Happy) Day, the Leaf coach and former Toronto defenseman who had established his niche in 1942, his rookie coaching year. After the third loss to Detroit, Day calmly told his men: "Forget the idea that you have to take four games in a row." Two weeks later the Leafs had done what had never been done before—or since; they rebounded, won four straight games, and the Cup.

If the acid in the Leafs' winning formula was supplied by Smythe, the glue belonged to Day. As a defenseman he never was reluctant to drape himself over an opponent and his defensemen did likewise. "When Day was playing defense," ex-Leaf Babe Pratt explained, "it cost the opposition triple money for sweaters. He used to rip them right off the players' backs with his clutch."

The Leafs displayed the same respect for Day that they observed with Smythe. Toronto's practices were severe but never to the point of creating dissension. One afternoon Boston defenseman Pat Egan stopped in Maple Leaf Gardens as the Leafs completed the last minutes of a torturous practice. "That's why they're goin' to win everything," said Egan. "Day could tell those kids to go into the wall head first and they'd do it."

One of those kids was Howie Meeker, a fighter from the Ezinicki

mold. Meeker, who later was to become a member of Canada's Parliament, was fast and tough and had a congenital desire to fight with Gordie Howe of Detroit and Tony Leswick of the Rangers. Al Nickleson of the *Toronto Daily Star* described a bout with Leswick: "The two started shoving and the action ended when Meeker picked Leswick up in a crotch hold, threw him to the ice with a body slam and, with Meeker atop, Leswick's head hit the ice, leaving him a groggy fellow."

Meeker added: "I had my fist back ready to give it to him but then I saw the glazed look in his eyes and I changed my mind."

Toronto's metamorphosis occurred in December after Max Bentley rediscovered his scoring touch. The Kid Line had reached its peak. The Apps line was never better balanced. While Ezinicki exploded everywhere, Apps and Watson collaborated for goal after goal; and every once in a while Ezzie would get one, too. Max, the dipsy-doodler, took a regular turn at center with Nick Metz and Klukay and worked the point on the power play. Later in the season young Sid Smith made his debut with Bentley. Despite claims by experts that other teams had better power plays, the Leaf onslaught was as awesome as any the NHL ever has known, and the balance wheel was Bentley. He'd play the right point. On the face-off the Leafs would outmuscle their opponents for the puck, then pass it to Maxie. Instead of trying the noisy and erratic slapshot so overused today, Bentley would cradle the puck on his stick and thread his way through the opposition with a series of peripatetic feints until he was within wrist-shooting distance of the goal. Then, he'd blur a quickie to the net. "Max," said Detroit's respected manager Jack Adams, "comes close to being the greatest player in the game."

Bentley's secret weapon was his quick wrists. "I got 'em," he explained, "from milking cows as a kid. There were eight cows on my father's farm in Saskatchewan and every day since I can remember, when I'm on that farm I milk the cows. Two hours in the morning and two hours at night."

Max's father, William, confirmed the ingredients of the secret weapon. "There's nothing like milkin' cows to build steel in your wrists," said old William Bentley. "My boy has milked enough cows to stretch from here to the Rocky Mountains, standin' tail to tail; and he's scored enough goals to make me the proudest man in Canada." Then, a pause: "Just forget the part about the Rocky Mountains. The cows would really only reach about 2,000 miles."

By late February, Max's line had scored 45 goals, the Apps line,

41. There was a pattern to the Leafs' scoring. They'd fall behind in the first and second periods, then surge to victory in the third. But, despite their balance and power, they were closely pursued by the Red Wings, themselves a potent outfit. The Wings had a superb young goaltender in Harry Lumley, a solid defense backed by Jack Stewart, Bill Quackenbush and Red Kelly, and the scoring of the production line—Sid Abel, Gordie Howe, and Ted Lindsay.

On March 10, with only five games remaining in the regular schedule, the Wings moved ahead of Toronto by a point. Then the Leafs rebounded and, as the final weekend approached, Toronto held a one-point lead over Detroit. The teams were to meet in a home-and-home series starting Saturday night in Toronto. If the Leafs won the opener they'd have the championship.

But more than first place was on the line. Goalies Turk Broda and the Wings' Harry Lumley were battling for the Vezina Trophy. Each had 138 goals scored against him. And captain Syl Apps, who insisted he would not return next season, needed three goals to reach the 200 mark.

Both goalies were riddled with a case of the nerves on Saturday but Lumley was the worse of the two. Twice the Wings took the lead and twice Lumley flubbed and Toronto tied the score. A goal by Apps—his 198th—put the Leafs ahead to stay in the second period and they scored again in the third to win, 5–3.

"Now," said defenseman Gus Mortson, "we're playin' the second game for Turk. He's been great for us all season . . . we'd just better win."

Next game Broda excelled. "I guess I was too nervous," said Lumley. Nervous or not, he never had a chance. Less than two minutes after the opening face-off at Detroit's Olympia, Harry Watson put the Leafs ahead. Now it was Apps' turn. He needed two goals for 200. He finally scored at 3:21 of the second period for number 199. Three minutes later, Watson cracked the Detroit defense and had Lumley at his mercy. A split second before he was to shoot, he spotted Apps moving in on his right. He slid the puck to his captain who blasted it into the webbing at 7:11 of the second. Early in the third period, Apps climaxed the evening with his 201st career goal and a hat trick. The Leafs won, 5–2, and Broda captured his second Vezina Trophy. "Now," said Ezinicki, "we've got to keep the Stanley Cup."

Toronto's opening-round opponents for the Stanley Cup, the third-place Boston Bruins, were big, tough and fast. "They'll beat the Leafs and win the Cup," predicted Ranger coach Frank Boucher, who had accurately declared at the beginning of the season that Montreal would be upset by New York and would finish fifth.

Boston was led by Frankie "Mr. Zero" Brimsek in goal, Milt Schmidt and Woody Dumart up front and a capable defense of Jack Crawford, Murray Henderson, Pat Egan, Fern Flaman and Clare Martin. In the first game at Maple Leaf Gardens, they punished the Leafs for two periods and built up a substantial 4–2 lead with only eight minutes remaining in the game. This time it appeared that the Little Major's troops would be routed, except that eight minutes was a long time for the Leafs. At 12:02 Apps took a long pass from Wally Stanowski, skated around Egan and blasted a hard shot at Brimsek that slipped through his pads. One minute and 23 seconds later the puck came to Jim Thomson at the point. The tall Leaf defenseman had not scored a goal all season. This time Thomson's shot sailed over Howie Meeker's shoulder and past Brimsek before the goalie ever saw it.

The game went into sudden death overtime and at 17:02 Nick Metz passed to Max Bentley whose shot was blocked by Brimsek. But the goalie allowed the puck to drop in front of him just as Metz swooped by. "Shucks," drawled farmer Nick afterward, "it was a set-up. All I had to do was bang it in." Which he did and that was that for the Bruins.

In the second game played at Toronto, Ted Kennedy scored four goals and Max Bentley one as the Leafs romped, 5–3, moving the series to Boston for the third and fourth games. And, once again, the Leafs had too much power. Artistically, they easily dispatched the Bruins with two goals in the first period, one in the second and two in the third. Fistically, they left matters to Harry Watson, the tall husky left wing.

Watson, the passive type with all the ability to be a high scorer and all the strength to be heavyweight champion, long had been criticized for his lack of zip and failure to annihilate smaller, pesty opponents who antagonized him. This time he was bothered by big defenseman Murray Henderson who was to be mashed in one of the most one-sided, bloody bouts hockey has known.

"The usually mild-mannered Toronto winger went berserk," observed Jim Vipond in the *Toronto Globe and Mail.* "He shed his gloves and peppered the Boston defenseman [Murray Henderson] with a series of hard, short jabs to the face. Watson landed at least

eight blows and Henderson was forced to retire to the Boston dressing room with a flattened nose."

Dr. Horace MacIntyre, the Leafs' physician who had treated players for more than 20 years, said he had never seen a nose so badly smashed.

Boston fans were furious over the double manhandling their team was getting. A group behind the Leaf bench began harassing the visitors early in the first period and continued their baiting throughout the game. When referee George Gravel asked the police to remove the offending spectators, Bruin president Weston Adams interceded and the fans remained and screamed even louder.

"One fan threatened to hit me," coach Hap Day recalled, "and I told him I'd be waiting at the end of the game. I turned around as soon as the game ended and the two of us tangled. I slipped to the floor and lost my fedora."

Most of the Leafs had departed for the dressing room before the riot had erupted, but defenseman Wally Stanowski lingered by the Toronto bench anticipating trouble. Stanowski went after the fans and the several others who joined in pummeling Day. Ted Kennedy and Garth Boesch, who had walked part way to the dressing room, doubled back and the melee spread to the ice. One fan bashed Boesch to the ice from behind. The Toronto defenseman was dazed and had to be taken back to the hotel and put to bed. The attacker ducked into the crowd and ran away into the promenade.

By then, police, linesman George Hayes and Bill Smith, a member of Smythe's World War II battery, had waded into the angry mob and held them off until Day and the players could get to the dressing room. When Weston Adams attempted to seek out Conn Smythe in the Leaf quarters he was promptly ejected by Smythe. "It's a disgrace, a positive disgrace," snapped Smythe. "The police did nothing. If they had put that fan out in the first period all the trouble would have been prevented."

The Boston press unanimously denounced the fans' conduct. "THUGS ATTACK TORONTO STARS," screamed the headline on the front page of the *Boston Herald*. "Most unsporting demonstration in Boston's hockey history," commented hockey writer Henry McKenna.

More than double the usual number of police were stationed at Boston Garden for the fourth game on April Fools' Day and the Bruins won, 3–2. But it was merely a dying gasp. Kennedy's goal at 5:52 of the third period buried the Bruins, 3–2, in the fifth game

and now the Leafs were ready for the hated Red Wings who had eliminated the Rangers in six games.

"We get paid to play the other teams," carped Detroit captain Sid Abel before the opener. "The Leafs? We'd play them for nothing."

Bookies listed Toronto as 2–1 favorites to win the Cup and the experts were saying the final round represented the Leafs' test of omnipotence. "It takes a really good team to win the Cup or the league championship," said Tommy Munns, sports editor of the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, "but only a really great team can win the Cup one season and retain it the next."

Hap Day's dilemma in the opening game was finding a replacement for defenseman Gus Mortson who had suffered a double fracture of the left leg in the second period. But the Leafs were so steeped in competent reserves it was no problem at all. He moved veteran Wally Stanowski into the opening and Stanowski set up the fifth Toronto goal in the 5–3 win.

Max Bentley's electric shot inspired the Leaf attack in the second game. He scored twice and linemates Harry Watson and Bill Ezinicki scored one apiece as the Leafs curbed Detroit, 4–2.

So decisive were the wins, the Detroit camp strained for an explanation. Finally, Jack Adams scooped up some hoary bromides and accused the Leafs of holding and interference. He said defenseman Bill Barilko had never made a legal check in his life. "I'm not alibiing for the way we played or because we lost," moaned Adams. "I'm not alibiing for the future. I'm not asking anybody for anything except a square deal."

All Adams got when the series switched to Detroit for the third game there was more of the withering Leaf power, and battering defense fronted by that super money player, Turk Broda. The fat man stopped Detroit and the game remained scoreless until the last minute of the second period when Ezinicki skittered out of the Toronto zone with Harry Watson at his side. An hour later, Smythe was to describe them as "the two best wingers in the game at the moment."

Once inside the Detroit blue line Ezzie dropped the puck and skated ahead, blocking goalie Harry Lumley's vision. Watson trapped the puck and fired a hot backhander behind Lumley. Burly Vic Lynn scored the second and final goal late in the third period snapping home a pass from Ted Kennedy.

Paul Chandler, hockey writer for the *Detroit News*, summed up the situation, "It is the Red Wings' misfortune that Toronto is a

great team with an uncanny ability to rise to almost every important occasion."

The final occasion was the fourth game of the series and the Leafs, as usual, rose.

Few teams have ever been so thoroughly demolished in their home ice in the final game of the Stanley Cup finals as the Red Wings that April 14, 1948. The onslaught started at 2:51 of the first period when Ted Kennedy sunk Max Bentley's rebound past Lumley, and it ended at 14:37 of the third period when rookie Les Costello took a Bentley pass and scored Toronto's seventh goal.

In between there were scores by Garth Boesch, two by Harry Watson, another by Kennedy and one by Syl Apps. The final score was 7–2, but the Red Wings goals were mere tokens. "There was never any doubt about it from start to finish," Jack Adams glumly admitted. Coach Tommy Ivan, dazed by the endless attacking waves of Leafs, could never devise an adequate defense: "We just couldn't do anything about it," he said.

Although it was Toronto's fourth Cup win in seven years the Little Major's troops couldn't contain their exuberance. Once they trundled into the dressing room Broda was stretched on the knees of Bentley and Klukay and doused with a bottle of Coke by Meeker. Smythe shed a coat and hat and settled on a trunk and beamed: "This is the greatest team I ever had. They never failed me and for the first time in my life I didn't have to give them a pep talk in the final series."

Laughing in the corner with pure childish joy was the man who lifted the Leafs to the plateau of complete supremacy. Max Bentley, who at the age of 16 had been rejected by the Montreal Canadiens and told by a doctor he couldn't play hockey again because of a bad heart, led the Leafs in scoring during the regular season and finished second to Ted Kennedy in the playoffs.

"He's an even better player than I thought," said Smythe. "He gave us the third center we needed to give us the Murderer's Row of hockey—three 25-goal centermen."

The next day they stepped off the Detroit train in mid-afternoon to be hailed by tens of thousands of Torontonians. With the Queen's Own Rifles band leading the parade, the Little Major and his troops rolled under a torrent of ticker tape in open cars from Union Station to the City Hall, where an additional 10,000 fans cheered Captain Apps when he was introduced to the throng.

It was the last time Apps would be seen as a Maple Leaf. He

stuck to his retirement decision as did Nick Metz although teammates tried to persuade them to change their minds. "If Syl would only come back for one more season," said Bentley, "we could be a cinch to repeat next year."

Young Ted Kennedy was named captain but without Apps and Metz the Leafs finished fourth the next season and appeared doomed against the Bruins in the Stanley Cup semifinals. Instead, they routed Boston in five games setting up a rematch with Detroit in the finals. The Wings had stampeded into first by a comfortable margin, 18 points ahead of the Leafs. But once the Wings faced Toronto again, they disintegrated. The Leafs romped to an unprecedented third straight Cup in four consecutive games.

A year later Detroit finally got revenge. They put the Leafs out in the seventh game of a sudden death semifinal round and it looked like the Toronto machine had permanently broken down. But it wasn't true. Bill Barilko scored the winning goal against Montreal in a sudden death overtime of the fifth game of the 1951 finals and the Leafs regained the Cup. A few months later Barilko was flying over the thick forests of Northern Ontario when the engine of his single-engined plane failed. The aircraft plunged to the ground, carrying the Leaf defenseman to his death. And with him went the great Toronto dynasty.

More than a decade went by before the Leafs were to win another Cup. After a series of mediocre efforts both on the ice and in the front office, the Toronto management signed George (Punch) Imlach as general manager and coach. An abrasive type with a very positive attitude, Imlach rebuilt the Leaf club with some extraordinary moves. He obtained Red Kelly from Detroit after Kelly had been considered jaded as a defenseman and immediately converted him to center. He liked Johnny Bower, an ancient goaltender who had been rejected by the Rangers, signed him and made him a regular. Meanwhile, the Leaf farm system was producing such impressive youngsters as Carl Brewer, Bobby Baun, Bob Pulford, Frank Mahovlich and Dave Keon.

Stimulated by Imlach, the Leafs duplicated the Hap Day feat of three straight Stanley Cups between 1962 and 1964 and appeared headed for even greater things because of the profusion of youth in the line-up. But Imlach's hard-nosed style began grating some of his more sensitive younger players. First, Brewer quit, then others complained. When the NHL expanded to 12 teams in 1967, Imlach unloaded Baun and Douglas but still overtones of mutiny were

heard. When the Leafs finished a poor fifth—and out of the play-offs—for the first time in a decade in the 1967–68 season there were rumblings that even more cuts would be made, possibly even Imlach himself.

But his triumphs still fresh in the minds of his bosses, Imlach hung on and continued to direct the club through the 1968–69 season. However, his influence was waning and the era of the triumphant Leafs once again had come to an end.

Imlach was fired on April 4, 1969, after a long feud with club president Stafford Smythe, son of the Maple Leafs founder. Smythe hired minor league coach John McLellan as the new club mentor and Jim Gregory as the manager.

The new regime enjoyed little success during the rebuilding year of 1969–70 but in 1970–71 several young players such as Jim Dorey, Mike Pelyk, Brian Spencer and Rick Ley enabled Toronto to reach a playoff berth.

The Leafs also obtained veteran goalie Jacques Plante from St. Louis and young goalie Bernie Parent from Philadelphia, giving them an excellent goalkeeping combination.

Despite their relative youth, the Leafs played competently in the 1971 playoffs, forcing the New York Rangers to a sixth game before bowing out in sudden-death overtime. Thanks to the insightful and calm coaching of McLellan and the maturation of the rookies, the Leafs appeared destined for better things in years to come. One of the results of the 1970–71 season as concerned the Leafs was the adoption of the new "third-man" rule. Not that they were the only offenders, but their bench-clearing battle with the Rangers in the playoffs was the third time Toronto was involved in this kind of mass brawling. The league decided that fines were no deterrent to a practice it found abhorrent. (Some governors, in fact, like Stafford Smythe and William Jennings were balky in paying and even succeeded in getting their assessments lowered.) So it was decided and instituted before the 1971–72 season that any man who leaves the bench while a fight is in progress gets a game misconduct and a minor penalty against his team. The third-man rule states that any player who is on the ice and intervenes between two other fighters, even as an alleged peacemaker, gets an automatic game misconduct. These rules have proved far more effective than a trip to the wallet in curbing mass brawls.

Meanwhile the Leafs had other headaches. In 1971–72 they were

again fourth but only by a few points and the Bruins eliminated them in five games. Any bright hope for the future went behind a big cloud labeled WHA that summer. The Leafs were one NHL team hardest hit by defections to the new league. They lost their top goaler Parent to Philadelphia Blazers; defensemen Rick Ley and Brad Selwood to New England; and tough center-ice man Jim Harrison also jumped to the Alberta Oilers. Plante could not shoulder enough of a load and near the end of the season, when Toronto saw they were doomed to a dismal sixth place finish, they dealt him to Boston.

Paul Henderson, hero of the Team Canada-Russia series, was hampered by injuries and scored only 18 goals while playing only 40 games. Bobby Baun's injured neck forced him into retirement after five games. Bright spots among the younger players were forwards Darryl Sittler and Rick Kehoe.

After the season McClellan went the way of all coaching flesh.

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